THE NATION

DECEMBER 27, 1958 . . 25c

BITTER CHRISTMAS

A Biographical Inquiry Into the Life of BARTOLOMEO VANZETTI

by Ralph Colp, Jr.

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LETTERS

Faces of Victory

Dear Sirs: After reading William Irwin's fine report on the Colorado election in the December 6 issue, an additional word on William Meyer's Congressional victory in Vermont might be in order.

Meyer, who stems from Quaker surroundings, presented a peace program to the electorate as his *main* campaign plank. He called for an end to the peacetime draft, the admission of Red China to the U.N., the cessation of nuclear-weapons tests, and ultimately the prohibition of nuclear-weapons production. He also spoke out against the continuance of military aid to dictator-countries. For these planks, he was vilified by the press and received endless counsel for their abandonment from Democratic sages.

While it is true that the unpopularity of his Republican opponent (whose ultra-conservatism has gone out of fashion here) contributed heavily to the startling result, it must be remembered that the Vermont Democratic Party, weak from 104 years of Republican rule, held no state-wide office from which to give Meyer strong support when the Republicans took after him on his foreign-policy declaration.

The labor movement played a special role in the campaign. Emerging from years of political inactivity, it threw its resources into the fight; hundreds of trade unionists poured out on Election Day to vote for Meyer.

STANLEY ARONOWITZ

Burlington, Vermont

Dear Sirs: I believe the main reason for Meyer's victory was the poor quality of the opposition. As one of that rare species, a native Vermonter who has been a life-long Democrat, I have always maintained that the Republicans of my state are more liberal than the GOP as a whole; and, given the choice between a sub-standard Republican candidate and what apparently appeared to them as a reasonably qualified Democratic candidate, they chose the latter. At least, Meyer seemed better qualified in comparison. Several important Republican papers, including the Rutland *Herald,* supported Meyer; and even the papers which supported the GOP candidate did so, in some instances, with evident reluctance.

It may interest you to know that, prior to Election Day, the chairman of the State Republican Committee spread a report that Walter Reuther had given the Vermont Democrats $50,000 for their campaign. But this nonsense was publicly repudiated by, among others, the Republican candidate for Lieutenant-Governor.

FLORENCE WEED

East Montpelier, Vermont

"Segregated" Ads in Washington Dailies

Dear Sirs: The three Washington, D.C., dailies — *Post-Times-Herald, Star* and *Daily News* — still segregate their real estate ads. Following a practice that was observed when restrictive covenants were rigidly enforced in the area, they still group their ads in undesignated, or "white," columns, and then in "colored" columns. Deplorable as the practice may be, at least in the days of the covenants it made sense. There *were* neighborhoods into which Negroes could not legally move. Now that covenants are unenforceable, the practice has the pernicious effect of perpetuating and extending segregated neighborhoods. Dealers are using the racial label to channel colored families into certain well-defined neighborhoods, while they hold the surrounding areas for white. And in racially changing neighborhoods, they arbitrarily list almost every house for sale as "colored," thus hurrying the change and frightening some white residents into feeling the neighborhood cannot be maintained as an integrated one and must eventually go all-colored.

At the present time, a group of twenty-eight organizations have approached the papers and urged them to follow the example of major newspapers in such cities as New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit and Cleveland, where such designations have been prohibited. . . . It seems self-evident that any attempt to make Washington an open community must begin with the elimination of racially designated ads. Since the letter columns of the local papers are closed to any discussion of the matter, it occurred to me that the columns of *The Nation* might be open. *Nation* readers in the Washington area — or elsewhere — can help by writing to the editors of the three papers urging them to list without designation, and pointing out— as the Washington *Post* did in a recent editorial — that the city "is a world capital" and that to some degree the actions of its citizens and organizations "are viewed as a microcosm of American institutions."

MARVIN CAPLAN,
Pres., Neighbors, Inc.

Washington, D.C.

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THE NATION

WHY A LONG essay on Vanzetti just at Christmas time? Well, Christmas is traditionally the season of forgiveness; Vanzetti went to his execution forgiving those who had wronged him, and it is time we forgave Vanzetti — for the burden of guilt he has laid upon us.

It is hard to accept the fellowship of a man you have killed, but we owe it to Vanzetti, and to ourselves, to try. The way to do that is somehow to break through the cocoon of symbolism in which we have isolated Vanzetti for thirty years, and approach him afresh as a fallible man among fallible men. As a martyr, Vanzetti no longer serves (we have more recent victims who strike the nerves more poignantly), but as a man his image does not fade. He was a fighter and a poet; we have as good reason to be proud of him as of any hero in our past. And as good reason to be grateful.

Ralph Colp, Jr., calls the essay he has written a "biographical inquiry," a modestly precise definition that reflects his scientific training. Dr. Colp is a psychiatrist and psychiatry is the tool that excels all others in breaking through symbols to reach the man beneath. As in his essay on Nicola Sacco (*The Nation*, August 16, 1958), Dr. Colp draws on unpublished information; but more striking than these new data are the new insights which the writer's approach makes available. He uses psychiatry with healing tact and delicacy; and his story has an astonishing gentleness after the long years of angry outbursts. But gentleness is implicit in the author's purpose. He is not seeking justice, he is not crying out for vengeance; he offers his readers the wisdom and friendship and great spiritual resources of Bartolomeo Vanzetti. — THE EDITORS

BITTER CHRISTMAS

A Biographical Inquiry Into the Life of Bartolomeo Vanzetti

. . by Ralph Colp, Jr.

Introduction: the Man Behind the Myth

> . . . I wish and hope you will lend your faculties in inserting our tragedy in the history under its real aspect and being. — *Vanzetti to H. W. L. Dana, August 22, 1927.*

BARTOLOMEO VANZETTI—overshadowing and sometimes incorporating Nick Sacco—attained two kinds of fame.

When he was executed in 1927, it was an event that millions of Americans would remember the way they would later remember the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the apoplectic death of Roosevelt. To most Americans, Vanzetti was not only a thief and a murderer, but a lowly Italian anarchist, outside of and inimical to a prosperous American way of life.

Since 1927, in plays, poems and novels by some of America's best writers, Vanzetti has emerged as an innocent man of vivid gentility who spoke the "noblest words in America in two generations since Abraham Lincoln died!"—words included in anthologies of poetry and of great letters. This Vanzetti is remembered by students of history and literature, the educated leaders of the labor movement, the vanguard of international radicalism. Joughin and Morgan, in their book, *The Legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti*, suggest Vanzetti might become an American legend.

Today, though we will probably never conclusively know whether Vanzetti was innocent of robbery and murder, this legend-fiction portrait dominates most thinking about him.

Now it is time to bring the portrait a little nearer reality; to make a biographical inquiry — a biography remains a desideratum — into the kind of man that Vanzetti was, and how he became that man. And from this to see him in relation to his times, in the round, and where possible with psychological insight.

For these purposes, I have relied mainly on what Vanzetti has

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said of himself. The published sources to which I have turned include *The Legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti; The Story of a Proletarian Life* and *The Background of the Plymouth Trial* (pamphlets written by Vanzetti and published by his defense committee); interviews with Vanzetti by newspapermen; and two collections of letters, one published by The Viking Press and another, in pamphlet form, prepared by Elizabeth Evans, one of the remarkable group of women who interested themselves in the case. In addition to this published material, certain records of the Bridgewater Hospital far the Criminally Insane were put at my disposal, and I have also drawn from the collection of unpublished letters on file in the Harvard Law School library.

Vanzetti's misspellings and idiosyncratic grammar are preserved in most of his published writings. In the main, I too have refrained from editing (whether dealing with published or unpublished material). It should be noted that certain of the published work—the autobiography, for instance—did undergo an editor's pencil, and so is free of the errors characteristic of Vanzetti's English.

1. Villafalletto (1888-1908)

BARTOLOMEO VANZETTI was born June 11, 1888, into a family of prosperous farmers living in Villafalletto, in northwest Italy.

He lived in Villafalletto his first thirteen years. In his maturity, with a sense of belonging never expressed about any other place in the world, he wrote of it as idyllic, bountiful, maternal nature: a rich and varied agricultural community raising corn, wheat, beets, silkworms and three yearly crops of hay. Its largest farms possessed over three hundred cows; there was a Swiss cheese factory; in the surrounding Alpine hills were apples, pears, cherries, grapes, plums, figs, peaches, all kinds of non-tropical fruit. In the town valley along the Magra River, there was almost every kind of flower: Vanzetti's earliest memories were of his father planting peaches and blue flowers in the garden of his house and his mother giving him honey every morning from a family beehive. Villafalletto was also the goal of the hard, seasonal migrations of the Alpine mountaineers. In the winter, the youngest left their old folk in mountain huts; with their cows and sheep, and carrying their furniture in mule-drawn carts, they descended to Villafalletto, lived in its houses and fed their animals from its hay. In spring and summer — riding in mule carts, carrying sacks and sharp bright scythes, singing in unison rough songs — they harvested Villafalletto's crops. They began work at three in the morning; then "the sun strikes providencially the soil of the turgid valley—but the sun strikes also mercilessly and often fatal upon the skulls of those poor creatures, bended upon furrows, seeing red, sweating blood" and "every years, some of those men fall into the furrows—forever. They went to their death singing."

Aside from this, Vanzetti mentions nothing about Villafalletto's buildings, the rooms of his own home, his friends, his brother and two sisters. He mentions only in the most summary fashion his mother and his father, who in different ways inflicted upon him the two most decisive and cruel blows of his life. Unfortunately, our main source for his thoughts about his parents is *The Story of a Proletarian Life,* an Italian autobiography translated into English. Its main outlines are true but Vanzetti found the translation "a poor thing . . . modified without my knowledge of it, to fit it to the Americans. . . ."

In letters, Vanzetti merely describes his father as "a land owner, a gardener, and an intelligent agricultural," "quite an honest and good man"—and that is all. Probably he could say no more because he recalled how his father had arbitrarily terminated his education. Vanzetti had attended school from six to thirteen: he had "loved study with a real passion" and won prizes in school examinations, including a second prize in religious catechism. In *The Story of a Proletarian Life*, he writes:

> My father was undecided whether to let me prosecute studies or to apprentice me to some artisan. One day he read in the *Gazetto del Popolo* that in Turin forty-two lawyers had applied for a position paying thirty-five lire monthly. The news item proved decisive in my boyhood, for it left my father determined that I should learn a trade and become a shopkeeper.
>
> And so in the year 1901 he conducted me to Signor Conino, who ran a pastry shop in the city of Cuneo, and left me there to taste for the first time the flavor of hard, relentless labor. I worked for about twenty months there — from 7:00 each morning until ten at night, every day, except for a three-hour vacation twice a month. From Cuneo I went to Cavour and found myself installed in the bakery of Signor Goitre, a place that I kept for three years. Conditions were no better than in Cuneo, except that the fortnightly free periods was of five hours' duration.
>
> I did not like the trade, but I stuck to it to please my father, and because I did not know what else to choose.

In 1905, Vanzetti moved to Turin, failed to find work, and moved to Courgne, where he worked as a caramel-maker and where in February, 1907, he fell ill with pleurisy. His father came to him and they rode back together in a train to Villafalletto:

> And so I returned after six years spent in the fetid atmosphere of bakeries and restaurant kitchens, with rarely a breath of God's air or a glimpse of His glorious world. Six years that might have been beautiful

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to a boy avid of learning and thirsty for a refreshing draught of the simple country life of his native village. Years of the great miracle which transforms the child into the man. Ah, that I might have had the leisure to watch the wonderful unfoldment!

In Villafalletto, Vanzetti went to bed and was nursed to health by his mother. Then occurred the second decisive blow of his life: the illness of her whom Vanzetti tersely describes as "my best beloved mother":

> One sad day my mother fell sick. What she, the family and I suffered, no pen can describe. The slightest noise caused her atrocious spasms. Many times I rushed towards the group of young men approaching along the road of an evening and singing gaily to the newborn stars, imploring them for the love of God and their own mothers to be quiet. Many times I begged the men on the street corner to go elsewhere for their conversation. In the last few weeks of life, her sufferings became so agonizing that neither my father, nor her relatives, nor her dearest friends had the courage to approach her bedside. I remained alone to comfort her as best I could. Day and night I remained with her, tortured by the sight of her suffering. For two months I did not undress.
>
> Science did not avail, nor love. After three months of brutal illness, she breathed her last in my arms. She died without hearing me weep. It was I who laid her in her coffin, I who accompanied her to the final resting place, I who threw the first handful of earth over her bier. And it was right that I should do so, for I was burying part of myself . . . the void left has never been filled.

Psychoanalysis might explain these inordinate feelings as follows: Each of us, in varying proportions, consciously or unconsciously both loves and hates his parents. When a parent dies, some of us unconsciously imagine—because of our hate—that we have actually killed this parent. Vanzetti probably held such a fantasy about the death of his mother; it would influence the rest of his life.

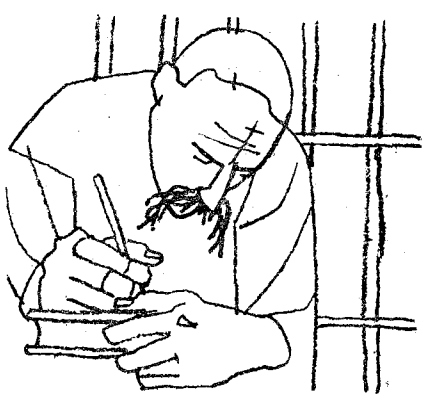
Following his mother's death, Vanzetti went for days without speaking, wandered in the neighboring woods, contemplated suicide by throwing himself from the Magra River bridge. There was a questioning of faith. In Cavour and to some extent in Turin, Vanzetti had been "a fervent Catholic," engaging in fist fights with Socialist workers. But in Turin, he had begun to read the anti-religious romances of the Italian writer DeAmicis, and back in Villafalletto, he listened to the anti-Catholic arguments of a doctor, a chemist and a veterinarian. His uprighteously Catholic father countered "that religion was necessary in order to hold in check human passions and to console the human being in tribulation."

Finally, like so many who are grievously disturbed—Christ going into the wilderness, Mohammed's Hegira—Vanzetti decided on flight.

There were several reasons for his choosing America. "For the young people in the old country to see America is a big thing," Vanzetti later said. Feelings of love and hate for a parent not only coexist; they may be expressed in the same action: Perhaps at the same time that he was opposing his father, Vanzetti was seeking to emulate him. For—unmentioned by Vanzetti—in 1881 his father had emigrated to America, stayed two years, and then returned to Italy and established himself.

On June 9, 1908, with his family sorrowing but not opposing him, Vanzetti left Villafalletto; a two-day train ride across France, a seven-day ocean voyage, and in July, 1908, an Italian youth just turned twenty reached New York.

> How well I remember standing at the Battery in lower New York, upon my arrival, with a few poor belongings in the way of clothes, and very little money. . . . Where was I to go? What was I to do? Here was the promised land. The elevated rattled by and did not answer. The automobiles and the trolleys sped by, heedless of me.



2. American Manhood (1908-1920)

IN THE next twelve years, Vanzetti became a foreigner, associating with North Italians, making little effort to learn English or American ways; a lowly, unskilled worker unprotected by trade unions and exposed to topical unemployment and poor work conditions. He experienced the ethos of his class and when, later, he read Beard's *The Rise of American Civilization,* he commented:

> This history as far as I reached it, would tell plenty of cronicles and of contrasting interests, almost exclusively between a ruling class and another semy-ruling class inspiring [aspiring] to the liberty of a full and sovereign ruling — and thus it would left, at the end of its reading, a bourgeaus worker or little fellow as bourgeaus as at the beginning.
>
> Nothing, I found in it till now of the instinctive and intuitive aspirations of the poor, of the hardly articulated but incommensurable souls of the humbles, — except if I must believe they are like the master — which, at least now day, it does not seem so to me.

The chronology of those twelve years was as follows. For a year Vanzetti was in New York City, first working for three months as a dishwasher in a night club, then for eight months as a dishwasher in Mouquin's, the famous restaurant. The pantry had no windows:

> During working hours the heat was terrific. The table leavings amassed in barrels near the pantry gave out nauseating exhalations. The sinks had no direct sewage connection. Instead the water was permitted to the floor. In the center of the room there was a drain. Every night the pipe was clogged, and the greasy water rose higher and higher and we trudged in the slime.
>
> We worked twelve hours one day

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and fourteen the next, with five hours off every other Sunday. Damp food hardly fit for dogs and five or six dollars a week was the pay. After eight months I left the place for fear of contracting consumption.

For three months, growing steadily more discouraged, he walked all over New York vainly looking for work, watching the poor sleeping in the open, and fumbling in garbage cans for cabbage leaves and rotten apples. One morning in an employment agency he met a young unemployed North Italian, "more forlorn and unfortunate than I," bought him a meal with his last savings, and the two decided to look for work in the country and took a steamboat near the Brooklyn Bridge for Hartford, Connecticut.

FOR A TIME, unable to find work, the two walked the Connecticut roads, shabby, trembling with hunger, pitied and fed by farm families. Vanzetti observed that protracted indigence had caused his companion to fall into "a terrible state" of apathy and indifference and when work was finally found in brick furnaces near Springfield, he soon quit. Vanzetti stayed on for ten months, though the labor was exacting. He lived in a colony of North Italians; there was considerable sickness and almost every day someone became feverish. But the evenings would be gay. Someone would play the guitar, Vanzetti would try to sing or "indulge in those minor echoes which, in case of waltzes run as follow,—um pa pa—um pa pa, and so on." He then went to Meriden, Connecticut, where for two years he worked in the stone pits "doing the hardest unskilled labor" and where the only pleasure he remembers was hearing the Tuscan language from an aged Italian couple with whom he lived.

Acquaintances counseled him: an unskilled worker could get neither work nor food and "was the lowest animal there was in the social system." Why not practice his culinary trade? Vanzetti returned to New York and worked in the Savarin Restaurant on Broadway as an assistant pastry chef. After eight months he was unexpectedly discharged. He immediately got relocated in a hotel on Seventh Avenue in the theatre district. After five months, he was again unexpectedly discharged. Then he learned that he was the victim of a "commission" system: hiring agencies split their fees with master chefs, and the more active the turnover the more fees there were to split. His acquaintances urged him to stick to being a pastry cook, but after five months vainly looking for work on the streets of New York—some nights sleeping in doorways and lining his clothes with newspapers to lessen the cold—Vanzetti hired himself out for pick-and-shovel work to an agency on Mulberry Street. He later recollected ". . . It was necessary to present ones self with unbuttoned shirts, because they wanted to see what one was like, they wanted to see the hair on the chest of the worker, and good for me that I am Latin with haired chest. They used to say: 'You are too small—you are too old.'" The agency sent him to Massachusetts; with a group of ragged men—mainly Italians—he lived "like a beast" in barracks in the woods near Springfield, working on a railroad. Then, with a fellow worker, he moved to other barracks near Worcester, and worked for a year as an unskilled factory laborer.

Circa 1914 he made his home in Plymouth, first tending the farm, garden and swimming pool of a private estate, then working for the Plymouth Cordage Company.

OVER the years, despite peregrinations, the long days' labors and uncongenial accommodations, Vanzetti read books: "Ah, how many nights I sat over some volume by a flickering gas jet, far into the morning hours! Barely had I laid my head on the pillow when the whistle sounded and back I went to the factory or the stone pits." He read pro- and anti-Christianity tracts; Italian translations of Hugo, Tolstoi and Zola; the Italian poets; histories of Greece and Rome and the American, French and Italian revolutions. Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Renan's *Life of Christ* were his two most re-read books. His main reading was Socialist-political: Peter Kropotkin, Gorki and Merlino, Malatesta, Reclus, Marx, Leon de Labriola, the testament of Carlo Pisacan, Mazzini's *Duties of Man*. The solitary, gaslight-illuminated figure had always been "something of a dreamer"; now, associating himself with Italian Socialists and anarchists, he called himself an anarchist and dreamt "a realizable, possible dream": "to have touch with mankind, to vivify the innate voice of brotherhood, and menace the lords, the tyrants of the land—as [did] the prophets of the oldest days."

His anarchism, like that of many revolutionaries, was a rejection of the childhood world supplied by his parents.

> My parents, in spite of their love and good will, they teach me many more ideas, false principles, and a false divinity. It is by a rinnovation of [my] own previous self through a self reaction, an inner tragedy which costed me the bleeding of my hearts blood that I rebegan and became what I am now. . . . We [anarchists] were as our enemies and adversaries are. Only by incessant mental work, and hard terrible trial of conscience we became different, as now we are. That is, we have analyzed, condemned, repudiated all conceptions, beliefs, the criterions, the principles that were inculcated in us from our infancy until the day of the beginning of our conviction.

He corresponded dutifully and warmly with his family, but when his father and an aunt wrote him to come back home to oversee the family lands, he stayed on in his American poverty: ". . . I have refused myself of what are considered the commodity and glories of life, the prides of a life of a good position, because in my consideration it is not right to exploit man."

In the Plymouth Cordage Company, Vanzetti — called "barbetta" because of his small beard—became a radical leader. The company, the largest of its kind in the country, sold rope made from sisal all over the world. Vanzetti was a member of an outdoor gang of Italian and Portuguese workers, loading rope coils on freight cars. The workers were underpaid, and on January 16, 1915, a bitter cold day, suddenly and spontaneously, they went on strike. In a letter written three weeks before his death, Vanzetti relates how

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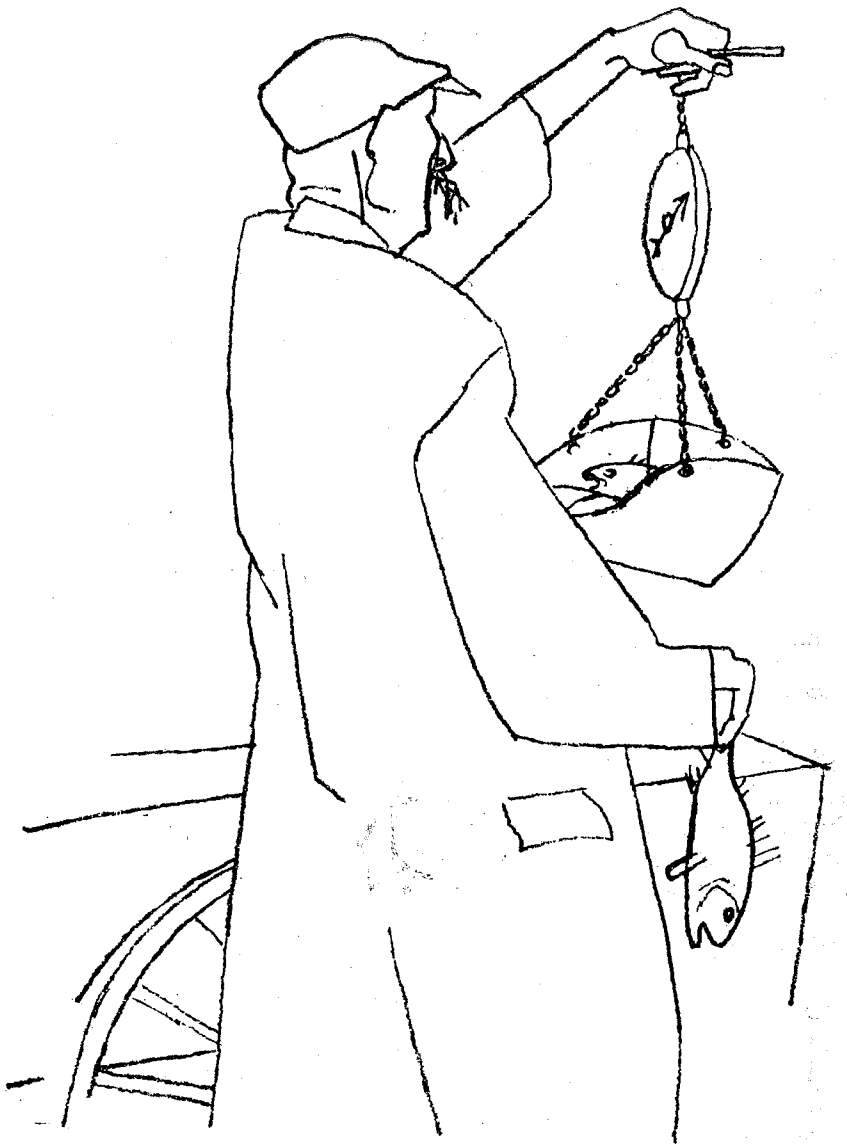
he advised the workers on strike tactics, gave his money to the strike, and traveled to Springfield and Worcester to speak at meetings of Italians and to raise funds: "Worked from six A.M. to ten or eleven P.M. during all the strikes; been present everywhere and at every meeting . . . collected funds and lost eighteen pounds of my flesh; fighting with every fool and crook hanging around and assuming all my responsibilities: proving myself untimideable and uncoruptible. . . ." After a month the employers met the strikers' demands. But with victory the cordage company would give Vanzetti no work and there was no union to help him.

Again he became an itinerant worker in the Plymouth area, building breakwaters, digging cellars, carrying bricks. In the spring of 1917, opposing America's entry into the war and wishing to avoid conscription, he went to Monterey, Mexico, with a group of Italian anarchists, including Nick Sacco. Some of the group found work cleaning hats and collars, but for Sacco and Vanzetti there was no employment, and after five months they returned. Sacco went home to Stoughton, Mass., but Vanzetti wandered for more than a year, from St. Louis to Youngstown, Ohio, to Farrell, Pennsylvania, before returning to Plymouth in the autumn of 1918.



Drawing by Gwathmey

HE WAS thirty. "The years of toil and the more terrible periods of unemployment had robbed me of much of my original vitality." Again he determined to be independent of employers and this time, instead of trying to be a cook, struck a new course. A friend who was returning to Italy said to him: "Why don't you buy my cart, my knives, my scales, and go to selling fish?" Vanzetti accepted. From April to November—Plymouth's fish season — Tuesday through Friday he trundled his cart selling fish to Italian, Portuguese and American families. The Americans would eat their fish the day they bought them; the Italians would salt the fish and eat them the next day; the Portuguese were the steadiest customers, and would frequently buy fish on Saturdays. Sometimes, after consulting the paper on the hour the tides would be out, Vanzetti would dig for clams on Plymouth Beach, selling them immediately afterwards. In the winter, he would cut ice from ponds and shovel snow from the streets and once in a while journeyed to Boston to buy fish to sell in Plymouth. He lived with a family of poor Italians, the Brinis; read, and wrote an occasional article for the Italian anarchist newspaper. On his trips to Boston, he would talk politics with the printer, Aldino Felicani, who remembers him as shabby, very gentle, always curious and tolerant of all views. He thus lived and labored from 1919 into 1920—his last year of freedom.

Judging himself during these twelve years, Vanzetti called himself "nameless in the crowd of nameless ones"; and, in his most spontaneous words, "I . . . unmarked, unknown, a failure." He had been a triple failure: as a labor leader he was unknown (except for the month of the cordage strike) to workers, as an anarchist uninfluential in the small American-Italian anarchist group. As a worker, although he labored hard and dependably, his heart was not in his work and he never tried to develop any skill. In later years, Nick Sacco was always enthusiastic when he talked of making shoes; Vanzetti only spoke of his work bitterly—he called Sacco the "*good* shoemaker" and himself the "*poor* fish-peddler." His most poignant failure: in his human relations, Vanzetti was alone. In Plymouth—after the years of transient contact with anonymous individuals, couples and families—he developed paternal feelings for Brini's boy Beltrando, his "spiritual son," and warmth and

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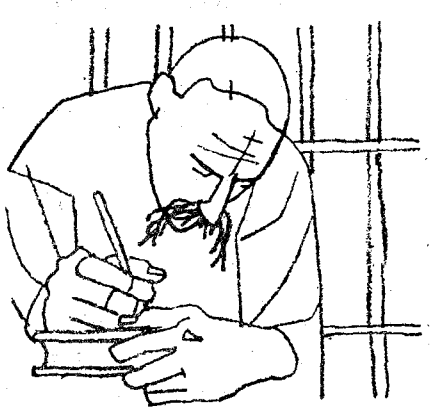
community of ideas with others who later labored in his defense. But there was no one whom Vanzetti could call his own, or be close to; no one to love or be loved by.

Paralysis of development, loneliness and nomadism are hallmarks of a mental state of depression. A depression may last years or a lifetime. It is brought on by many things; a frequent cause is an unconscious guilt fantasy of having killed a parent.

An explanation of Vanzetti during these twelve years is that he was depressed because of unconscious guilt over the death of his mother. Recollect his feelings when he buried her: "I was burying part of myself . . . the void left has never been filled." Later, during his imprisonment and impending execution—which he dubbed "this black hour second only in sorrow to that of my mother's death"— he wrote: "My heart is the tabernacle in which my mother, and she was brave, lives. If a good hour will strike me, I will tell you of her. Not now. It is impossible now." And "I cannot speak of my mother, having murder in my heart. I can only say that I am glad she died before my arrest. I think I will never be anymore able to speak of her." And he never did speak of her.

Lost persons may be replaced by surrogate persons or by impersonal symbols, whose real meaning is known only to the unconscious. Nature, whole or in parts, is a common maternal symbol and was so regarded by Vanzetti. Here is a passage from one of his letters: "To live free among the green and the sunshine under an open sky in an apoteosy of fluid life, of lights, colors, and armories . . . to torn with the teeth and fingernails, directly from the motherly earth, the everyday bread —it was always my dream." In another passage, he desires to be directly reunited with Mother Nature: "Do not violate the law of nature, if you do not want to be a miserable. I remember: it was a night without moon but starry. With the face in my hands I began to look at the stars. I feel that my soul want goes away from my body, and I have had to make an effort to keep it my chest, so, I am the son of Nature, and I am so rich that I do not need any money."

Vanzetti had made two attempts to follow his "profession as pastry cook." In between—digging soil, cutting rock and carrying brick—he worked "Mother Earth." Finally he became a "son of Nature." In spring and summer, he lived from fish from the sea and clams from the shore; in winter, he chopped ice and shoveled snow from the rolling Massachusetts hills and lakes, so unlike the Alps and the valley of Villafalletto. Yet, like the Villafalletto mountaineers, his work was in rhythm with the seasons.



3. Arrest and Trial (1920-1921)

DECEMBER 24, 1919, a gang attempted an unsuccessful robbery at Bridgewater. On April 15, 1920, a gang successfully robbed the South Braintree shoe company, shooting to death two payroll guards. There were other robberies, and to protect his small earnings Vanzetti—for the first time in his life—purchased a revolver.

All during 1919 and into 1920, creating a miasma of fear which has probably never been surpassed in American history, the Department of Justice was arresting and deporting hundreds of alien radicals. Vanzetti read lurid newspaper accounts of his acquaintances being arrested, of what the radicals were doing, of what the government would do to them. Unimportant himself, he remained untouched. When the Italian radical printer Salsedo was arrested by the FBI, he journeyed to New York to aid in the defense; upon his return to Boston on May 2, he advised Italian radicals to destroy their literature and disperse. Becoming a radical leader for the first time since the cordage strike, he planned to address an anti-war meeting. Suddenly, on May 3, 1920, a suicide or murder victim, Salsedo plunged to his death from the New York building where he had been held.

On the evening of May 5, on his way to warn comrades that Salsedo's death presaged fresh persecutions, Vanzetti boarded and sat down on the streetcar that ran between Bridgewater and Brockton. Beside him sat Nick Sacco, a comrade whom Vanzetti had known since Monterey, Mexico. The streetcar stopped, a police car drew up beside it, and a police officer came aboard and walked up to Sacco and Vanzetti. "Where did you fellows get on?" he said. "West Bridgewater," answered Sacco. "I'll have to ask you to come along with me," ordered the officer. "What for?" queried Vanzetti. "What we done?" added Sacco. "We'll see," said the policeman, who then — according to Vanzetti—drew his revolver, and pointing it at him said, "You, don't move, you dirty thing." Unresisting, Sacco and Vanzetti were taken from the trolley to the Brockton police station.

The police had arrested Sacco and Vanzetti as suspects in the Bridgewater and South Braintree robberies. But Sacco and Vanzetti thought they had been arrested as radicals about to be deported.

The Brockton police searched Vanzetti, found his revolver and some radical leaflets, and thus identified him as a social pariah. Refusing to tell him why he was under arrest, they questioned him about his radical associates, and when he replied, punched and pushed him and called him a liar. And, fearful of incriminating his comrades, Vanzetti did lie. He was then locked in a cold cell. When he asked for a blanket, an officer replied, "You catch warm by

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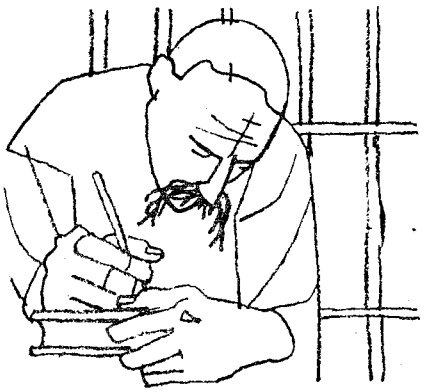
yourself—in the morning we put you in a line in the hall between chairs and we shoot you." One officer walked up to Vanzetti in his cell, spat in his face, then moved back, broke the barrel of his revolver, showed Vanzetti that it contained cartridges, and pointed it at him. All the while Vanzetti stood behind his bars silent and immobile, and eventually the officer went away. Next morning, unkempt, dirty and disheveled, Vanzetti was photographed.

In the ensuing twelve months, there were two trials. In the first, Vanzetti was tried for the attempted December 24 holdup at Bridgewater. The trial took place at Plymouth in June and July, 1920, and lasted eleven days; Vanzetti was found guilty and sentenced to twelve to fifteen years in Massachusetts State Prison at Charlestown. A few hours after sentence, manacled, surrounded by armed guards, he was driven in an auto to Charlestown, and placed in a cell to begin his sentence.

Then, in July, 1921, Vanzetti was driven from Charlestown to Dedham, where he was put on trial with Nick Sacco for the South Braintree murders. After two months, both defendants were found guilty. The death sentence was mandatory, and while this pended, Vanzetti was taken back to Charlestown to continue his Plymouth sentence.

"Everything is against me," Vanzetti said of the two trials. Prosecutor Frederick Katzmann and Judge Webster Thayer, who served at both trials, and the two different juries saw Vanzetti as a foreigner, an unskilled and propertyless worker, a radical and a draft-dodger—the antithesis of everything American. Vanzetti's poor education, scant understanding of English and ignorance of American legal procedure were against him. The Dedham trial defense was good, but in the Plymouth trial Vanzetti's Italian lawyer, John Vahey, did not allow his client to take the witness stand, called none of his Plymouth acquaintances to testify in his behalf, and was friendly with the state prosecutor. Said Vanzetti: ". . . Mr. Vahey has not defended me. He has sold me for thirty golden money like Judas sold Jesus Christ." Vahey, smoking a large cigar, whistling and whirling his fingers, told Vanzetti he might get the electric chair.

Then came a lull: the defense appealed seven times for a new trial on the murder charge and each time was turned down. By the end of the last appeal Vanzetti was still alive, unsentenced for the Braintree killings, still serving out his time at Charlestown for the attempted Bridgewater holdup—and six of the most important years of his life had passed.



4. The Long Travail (1921-1927)

THEY WERE years of suffering: he who had been free and footloose was confined "in a small cell which has free space eight feet long and one foot ten inches wide." A bell rang for morning waking, breakfast and room cleaning. A whistle piped work: first Vanzetti worked in the prison shop, painting auto licenses, and then —when the paint fumes made him ill—as a tailor. A whistle piped lunch and the noon counting by the guards. Then back to his cell. A bell rang for afternoon work, a late afternoon whistle for "talking, playing, and joking" in the prison yard. A bell for supper, then back to the cell, and a final ring for lights out. Vanzetti wrote of feeling "buried" and "squashed" and "crushed" and "tired, tired, tired," and becoming a "shadow" of a man. He longingly "looked at the sky and the overhead stars," was sensitive to barometric and temperature changes. Halfway through his imprisonment, he let himself go in a prose poem on nature:

> O the blessing green of the wilderness and of the open land — O the blue vastness of the oceans — the fragrances of the flowers and the sweetness of the fruits — the sky reflecting lakes — the singing torrents — the telling brooks — O the valleys, the hills — the awful Alps! O the mistic dawn — the roses of the aurora, the glory of the moon — O the sunset — the twilight — O the supreme extasies and mystery of the starry night, heavenly creature of the eternity.
>
> Yes, Yes, all this is real actuallity but not to us [he and Sacco], not to us chained — and just and simply because we, being chained, have not the freedom to use our natural faculty of locomotion to carry us from our cells to the open horizon — under the sun at daytime — under the visible stars at night.

Paying this price, in these six years Vanzetti underwent an intellectual and emotional burgeoning. In his thirties—when he was thirty-three, he noted that it was the age of Christ —he changed from an uncreative person to a creative one. Several things contributed to this.

First were changes in Vanzetti's unconscious. The creative process is little understood, but an unconscious guilt is known to relate actively to it; in some conditions it acts as a stimulus; in others, as an inhibitor. If Vanzetti had been inhibited because of an unconscious guilt feeling that he had killed his mother, and if he were now suffering for a crime he had not committed, then his prison ordeal would assuage his guilt and liberate creative mental energy. Parenthetically, one might add that his entire behavior in prison was more that of an innocent than guilty person, although the evidence is not conclusive.

Another factor in his burgeoning: Vanzetti found he had a public. In capturing and holding spontaneous, unorganized public interest in Europe and America, the Sacco and Vanzetti case was without precedent. As early as 1921, Vanzetti wrote:

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. . . What has been done for us by the people of the world, the laborers (I mean the workers) and the greatest minds and hearts proves beyond any possible doubt that a new conception of justice is planning its way in the soul of mankind: a justice centered on man as man. For as I have already said, you, they are doing for us what once could only have been done for saints and kings. This is real progress.

Having "the people of the world" as an audience was a stimulus possessed by few. Through the prison years there were friendly visitors and correspondents: Aldino Felicani and Italian comrades aided him in the Plymouth defense; afterward, during the Dedham trial, came Americans—the first Vanzetti had really gotten to know in his thirteen American years. Among them were Communists, anarchists, Socialists and liberals of variegated hue. A group of women came to occupy a prominent place among his visitors, the most important being Mrs. Elizabeth Glendower Evans, Mrs. Jessica Henderson, Mrs. Gertrude L. Winslow, Mrs. Irene Benton, Mrs. Kate Dial, Mrs. Cerise Jack and Miss Alice Blackwell. These women had certain attributes in common: They were in their sixties and seventies, mostly married and the mothers of families, wealthy, cultured, socially prominent, liberal; many had worked in reform movements, acquiring hard, practical experience. Between Vanzetti and these American mothers there developed over the years feelings of trust, affection—and love. To Vanzetti they were maternal surrogates—replacing nature—people who really cared for him and with whom he could do what he had never really done in his life: share his feelings. To the American mothers, Vanzetti was an exciting *cause célèbre* and an attractive personality with a potential for growth which they were helping to realize.

THE final factor in Vanzetti's burgeoning: Charlestown's confinement gave him the board, room and leisure which he had previously failed to achieve. He put on twenty pounds; the prison regimen left him Sundays and evening rest periods free; Warden Hendry and the prison staff treated him respectfully and facilitated his receiving of books and visitors and his sending of mail.

Vanzetti's burgeoning began formally with a letter he wrote to Mrs. Elizabeth Evans in July, 1921. "I was just thinking what I would do for pass the long days jail; I was saying to myself; do some work. But what? Write. A gentle motherly figure came to my mind and I rehear the voice." Mrs. Evans' voice, Vanzetti tells us, said two things. First, "Now you advise me to study. Yes, it would be a good thing. But I do not know enough this language to be able to make any study through it. I will like to read Longfellow's, Paine's, Franklin's, and Jefferson's works, but I cannot. I would like to study mathematics, physics, history, and science, but I have not a sufficient elementary school to begin such studies. . . ."

IN THE ensuing years, feeling the "fever of knowledge," Vanzetti did study: Italian books to help him overcome the limitations of his elementary-school education; English books, with the added handicap of learning a new language. His friends encouraged him, sent him books. Over several years, Mrs. Virginia MacMechan, a young school teacher, gave him English lessons in the Charlestown visitors' room, and corrected his English compositions. To her he described how he read a book: "From the beginning to the end, first to acquire a general criterion . . . the best and the worse remain fixed in my mind. After I repass and study the more important of these two things—minutely dissecting and analyzing them. The same I do in respect of their ethic and technical points, drinking merely from the first, squeezing all the good from the second. I am ferocious, implacable, and good-hearted even with books." Sometimes—he humorously told Mrs. Evans—he read standing on his feet and leaning "like an elephant" against his cell wall. He progressed and by 1923 was reading Robinson's *Mind in the Making* and William James's *Psychology*, and his list of American writings came to include the *Survey Graphic*, the *New Republic*, *The Nation*, and books by Jack London, Sinclair Lewis and Upton Sinclair.

The second thing the voice of Mrs. Evans told him was, "Why don't you write something now? It will be useful to you when you will be free." Early in prison, Vanzetti began a bilingual, variegated literary production. In Italian, he wrote articles for anarchist newspapers and a novelette, *Events and Victims*, recounting his experiences in a munitions factory before America entered the war. Written in Italian and then translated into English were articles for the Defense Committee *Bulletin*; his pamphlet-autobiography, *The Story of a Proletarian Life*; and a pamphlet, *Background of the Plymouth Trial*. The English writings were a translation of Pierre J. Proudhon's *War and Peace*, a book which had become his political Bible; and, creating the deepest, most rounded picture of him, his letters to American friends.

There are probably no other letters in which learning English and development of ideas are so joined. Vanzetti's English vocabulary grows richer, but the misspelling of both common and esoteric words does not seem to improve much, and the grammar remains awkward. The ideas proliferate and in December, 1926, Vanzetti wrote that while his understanding was increasing, his powers of expression seemed to be diminishing.

THE letters are political, polemical. To a woman correspondent, he writes: "I am a bitter polemist, a merciless theorist, and I know to cause others much anguish. . . . The words that I am writing will disturb you, will cause your heart to ache, but would you prefer my insincerity to my sincerity?" In another letter, he notes that only now, in prison, has he reached "sureness of thought." He is the anarchist—equally against all state institutions, Russian Communists, Italian Fascists and American democratic capitalists, and oblivious to American democratic processes and Constitutional reforms.

He is also the political student, shunning humbug and the unexamined, marshaling the available evidence and constantly seeking understanding. On the wall of his small

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and crowded cell he has fastened a map of the world; and from this barred hole, he limns the socio-political profiles of different countries.

In 1926, when most people were either for or against, he tries to *understand* Russia:

> In Russia, this happened: the Czarism was destroyed by a revolution; part of the owners were expropriated; a party took the power, stopped the continuation of expropriation and appropriated to itself that part of the social wealth which had already been expropriated by the people. From that moment the revolution began its regression and few leaders of a small party became the only and real rulers of Russia. They were immediately compelled to form a national army, and build a policy worse than the Czars' one; to uphold a new church, not better than the old one; and, given the conditions, to be more reactionary and tyrannic than the dethroned autocracy itself.

A penetrating social satire on an American institution of the 1920s is a letter in which Vanzetti turns the pages of an issue of *Hearst's International* and comments on its tawdry "art," photos of nudes; its inane ads which promise knowledge on purchase of a *Nelson's Encyclopedia,* wisdom on sending a donation to Lionel Pelman, and strength on sending another donation to a naked "fortism" strong man. An article in the issue ascribes the death of American Presidents to overwork and the pressure of office-seekers, but omits what to Vanzetti is the main reason: the Presidents' "vain efforts to save an unjust social order in decomposition." To Vanzetti, the title of another article, "Nationwide Conspiracy of the Ku Klux Klan," "sounds like a sneeze."

His insight is charged with a mounting, rhapsodical sort of sadness as, over these six years, he writes of Italy. The triumph of fascism "has revealed . . . the moral loneness in which we have fallen after the war and the revolutionary over-excitation of the last few years." In 1924, on reading of the killing of Matteoti, "It seems that the workers have [not] learn anything . . . the began again great and noisy choreography—sing Red Flag—made big talk—and be beaten again." One hundred thousand workers "ran away like rabbits" before one thousand Fascists whom they could have eliminated in a few hours. "They [the workers] sing Red Flag and fail daily under the Fascists' dagger. Then the murderers get the prize—the victims the grave—their relatives in prison. And again: great funerals, great talks, great runaway—and great noise of red flags falling in the mud of blood and shame.

"It is this awful unconsciousness of the people and the work of their leaders . . . who only look for power —that have permitted-caused the fascism and all its horrors."

Fascist rule is "blood, crimes, degeneration," but in the future Vanzetti sees a possible "liberation, reached through a terrific lavacrus of blood, through aspiration, heroic sacrifice and fire"—almost a prophecy of World War II.

A ranging, powerfully tragic, view of mankind runs through the letters. In 1923, he writes: "The dearest manifestation of the universe for me is mankind, with its miseries and proudness, its glories and its shames, its smallness and its grandeur." And in 1924:

> Oh, how right we anarchists are in our postulates, criterions, critics, and fights. Mankind want not, cannot understand us. It is too villain, too tartufe, too traviated, too coward. We climb our Calvary under our cross—but indeed, the madness, the ignominious tragedy of our crucifiers, peoples and tyrants, made us laugh at our worst moment but it's terrible and stupid immensity. We go to hell, but with many in company. We witnessing the end of a world, but with Christ and Socrates for teachers.

And this in 1927:

> Very often I turn around my eyes to see, contemplate and study the world even and mankind. The spectacle is extremely repugnant and heart-tearing. At it, one does not know if to love or if to hate, if to sympathize, or if to despise humanity. . . .
>
> Things are going from bad to worse. War in China, Nicaragua, revolution in Java, Mexico, Brazil; the Baltics on foot of war; France and Italy mobilizing, one against the other; England, U. S., France, and Japan in a crazy rivalry of armament; South America and U.S. in danger of war; Italy under the Fascist dictatorship, Russia under the Bolshevik one; scandals, corruption, crimes, diseases, degeneration, greed, hatred, unconsciousness, prejudices and insanity sweeping the earth. I wonder how it will end.

In learning English, Vanzetti was not only learning to think, but — in the manner of a patient talking to a psychiatrist — learning to put his feelings into words; making unconscious and repressed feelings conscious. His earliest Villafalletto memories were of a passive, maternal nature and an active, masculine nature. Gradually, writing of the passive-active dichotomy in nature and politics, he came to see the dichotomy in himself. Vanzetti's whole life had been a passive bowing to events; as he came to recognize this passivity, he disliked it, yet was unable to change it. The only thing he could do was to write grandiose, flamboyant, violent fantasies. But the more he wrote such fantasies, the less he could actually commit violent acts, and the more he disliked his passive role. He describes this passive-violent conflict, and the supremacy of the first, in a letter written in July, 1923, on the day following the electrocution of a fellow prisoner named Pappas:

> I was tired, disgusted, and furibond. Many time, during the last three hours, I was tempted to smash my door, to began a revolt. But I am almost civilized—quasi coward—and still stay serene as our ancient wisdom, Christianism, and modern sciences command. Then next morning I knocked at the souls of my comrades in chains, "Well," said I, and look in their eyes—"what a hell can we do? We can do nothing." I hate my tongue. With one alone I said: "We can do all that is humanly possible. Just to know and to will and we would have been able to save Pappas, were not us cowards."

This feeling of "furibond" then became one of the lineaments of a psychosis.

IN OCTOBER, 1924, Vanzetti complained of symptoms characteristic of the onset of many psychoses. He felt a sensation of electricity in the air and an unexplainable feeling of

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"something funny" in his head and chest which he felt presaged an earthquake. The following month he wrote:

> My native me is dreary for what it is becoming. I have cut down trees with a sense of sympathy for them, and almost a sense of remorse; while now thinking of my axe a lust seizes me to get a mad delight and exaltation by using them on the necks and trunks of the men eaters; on the necks of those who seem to have evil in their head, and on the trunks of those who seem to have evil in their breast.

A letter written by Dr. Joseph McLoughlin, Charlestown's physician, and Dr. Charles Sullivan, Massachusetts state expert for insane criminals, relates what happened in December. Vanzetti became disturbed in his cell and on December 8, was transferred to another cell, where every night he barricaded the door with a table, saying men might overpower his guards and kill him. On the morning of December 24, in the prison workshop, he became abusive and threatening to another prisoner whom he claimed was laughing at him. On the night of December 30, in "some sort of frenzied attack," he smashed a chair to pieces in his cell room. Before and after this he was seen by Dr. McLoughlin and Dr. Sullivan. He told them that he had been forsaken by everyone; that "perjurers" at his trial, "fascists" and "others" were "out to get him," and for "self-protection" he needed to carry a gun. When the doctors asked why he broke the chair, he said he was "mad." McLoughlin and Sullivan diagnosed him an "insane" and "dangerous person" in a "hallucinatory and delusional state of mind" and recommended his committal to Bridgewater Hospital for the Criminally Insane.

On January 2, 1925, manacled and guarded by police officers, he arrived at Bridgewater. When the admitting doctor asked him what brought him to a mental hospital, he replied, "I don't know, I am not crazy. Perhaps they think I need a rest." For the next two months he was controlled, polite, a "model prisoner." In February, during three interviews with Bridgewater doctors, he elaborated his fear of an Italian Fascist plot against him. Vanzetti pointed out that in the past two or three years the Fascists in Italy had killed 10,000 political opponents. "I have never read of any political party that is as violent as this one. They are criminals in every branch of criminality." Although the Italian Fascist press was supporting Sacco and Vanzetti as Italians, Vanzetti opined that because of his prominence and anarchism he, Vanzetti, was "a brick on the chest of Mussolini, and the best way that he can do now is to send the people to the cemetery. I would be among them." Since 1921, the number of Fascists among Charlestown's Italian inmates had grown; among them were men whom Vanzetti was "positive" could kill him "any time any day that they want to." In Bridgewater, too, there were Fascists: "I feel it. No, I more than feel it." Somewhere in Bridgewater was an Italian, presumably a Fascist, who had killed three men outside prison, then stabbed to death with a shoemaker's knife another prisoner; but Vanzetti refused to reveal his name, saying that even when it came to Fascists he was no stool pigeon.

Today we do not know whether there was a Fascist plot or not. Neither did the Bridgewater doctors; they could only evaluate Vanzetti's story as possessing "a somewhat paranoid coloring."

On February 23, the Bridgewater records noted that Vanzetti spent the day sitting in a chair pretending to have his eyes closed, but watching the other prisoners. At dinner that night, he looked at his food suspiciously, then took potatoes from another prisoner's plate and ate them, saying nothing.

HERE the Bridgewater records stop; the remaining Bridgewater story, gleaned only from Vanzetti's letters, is confusing and incomplete. On April 6, Vanzetti writes: "Something is gradually dying in me, and what remains is just all right. I'm beginning to believe the Bible. 'The tyrants should be stabbed.'" And he noted a return of his original body sensations. "As for me, I have suffered the last few days a terrible heartburn, and I have said, and maybe I may have, or I may not have, ulcers in my stomach. If I have ulcers, it is all right, though I will fight against. If I have no ulcers, it is still better." On April 10, "We are galloping towards misery and wretchedness. Life grows miserable by each second, and he whom the Gods have not yet wholly deprived of understanding, far from being surprised, should indeed wonder if it were not so, for man is today his own greater enemy, and the slaves are, more than the powerful, the slave-keepers of themselves." He quotes Anatole France's *Penguin Island*, which he has just been reading: "After having destroyed the present curse called civilization, the people returned to a certain primitiveness through which they gradually build and return to the present state."

WHEN A new Italian patient was brought to Bridgewater, the authorities, evidently fearing a disturbance, moved Vanzetti to a new ward and restricted his movements. Vanzetti was bitter: in a letter to Miss Blackwell, written in pencil on a torn scrap of brown, grocery-bag paper, he says: "I have already experienced that in the name of 'psychopathy' may be committed the same, if not more cruelty, injustice, and partiality, as in the name of the law. Psychology is still more subtle and indefinable than law itself."

Then, on April 17, Vanzetti reports that the bodily sensations which had begun his illness were abating. After this, he proceeded to get well and on May 11 writes: "Yes, my heartburn is gone, and I am quite well, so well that I feel to write a treatise on sociology, which I have not yet begun, because I wish to hear some friends in its regard." Glancing back at his illness, he describes his penchant for violence: "Death for death, I think that the times require to bring with us some enemies, some blackguards — I should say the more that is possible. It is my reason, not my heart, that is speaking so. I think I do not feel so now, but sometimes. I still abhor the blood now, as always before."

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Despite his violent words, his most violent deed was to break a chair in his cell at Charlestown.

Vanzetti's earlier feeling of being "forsaken by everyone" now changed to a renewed interest in people. On June 20, he wrote to Irene Benton, one of his elderly American "mothers": "To have your friendship, to know to be a friend of you — is dear, very dear to me. The spirit of your words reach and thrills the innermost sources of my life. You are great in goodness, comrade Irene, generous as the vital elements. . . ."

One may speculate on the psychiatric dynamics of Vanzetti's madness. His main symptom was a fear of being attacked by men and a wish to attack men. Such a symptom is frequently due to an insufficiently repressed erotic desire for another man. Of Vanzetti's erotic life we know only that before prison he mentions no woman, and while in prison his relations with them could only be platonic. Before prison his relations with men were transitory, suggesting that he avoided prolonged contact. In prison, for the first time, he had to live for years with the same men. What was this like? Vanzetti's letters shun any reference to his fellow convicts and no Charlestown inmate has written of Vanzetti. But the experience may have caused previously repressed erotic desires toward men to break into consciousness — so unbearably as to throw Vanzetti into a psychosis. This speculation does not explain why it took Vanzetti three years to become psychotic, why his psychosis lasted only six months, and why and how he then came out of it.

On May 28, 1925, with the Bridgewater doctors certifying him not insane, Vanzetti was returned to Charlestown. Confined in a more capacious cell, he found that the authorities in Bridgewater had lost many of his books. Most missed was a copy of the *Divine Comedy* given him by a "far away comrade and friend," which he had had expensively bound and which he had carried with him during his free toiling years. Dante, too, had experienced the "dark wood" of his own madness, and come out of it.

Since the fall of 1924, William G. Thompson had become chief lawyer for Sacco and Vanzetti, succeeding Fred Moore.

Thompson was a New England scion who, the year Vanzetti was born, had graduated with honors from Harvard and had then become a very busy and distinguished Boston lawyer; he was a conservative, a believer in the capitalistic system and in the church as an institution. He also believed in fair play and *noblesse oblige*, and it was this last which brought him into the Sacco and Vanzetti case. After two and a half years' association with Vanzetti, he said:

> If Vanzetti had an education he would have been a professor in Harvard College. He is one of the most gifted men that I know of. I have heard him give a most enlightening talk on Ralph Waldo Emerson, he has discussed Shelley's poems with me, and I have heard him use words that I have had to go home to look for in the Century Dictionary to find the meaning of. He is a dreamer, and an idealist. . . . The Harvard graduate, the man of old American traditions, the established lawyer, is now quite ready to say that nowhere in his soul is there to be found the faith, the splendid gentility, which make the man, Bartolomeo Vanzetti.

On the side of Vanzetti there was admiration for Thompson's skillful defense and an intimate thanks: "Of what you are doing for us, Mr. Thompson, I am not only grateful and thankful for myself alone, but for my old father, for my brother, my sisters, for all those who I love and am loved." And: "I hope to understand a little the brave, learned, beautiful fight that you are fighting in our behalf, paying of it in peace, rest, interest, and other universally desired things." Vanzetti did come to understand much of Thompson's "fight," so different from his own fight of the classes. Of all the Americans, it was probably Thompson who most enriched Vanzetti's mind — and trammeled his violent part.

Through 1926, Thompson argued two motions for a new trial before the Massachusetts Supreme Court, and the case of Sacco and Vanzetti gained a wider public in Europe and America. Vanzetti felt new hope: ". . . Denial of a new trial, after the work of Mr. Thompson, would [be] . . . a dangerous answer to the conscience of the world. It could change the proletarian Jobs into a Sampson, the proletarian rabbit into a lion. There would be flames . . . Nor I believe the five men [the State Supreme Court Justices] capable of such monstrosity." Previously, Vanzetti had written on matters not directly connected with the trial; now, describing his mind as a "hurricane of thoughts, feelings, and sentiments," he concentrated on conferring with members of the defense, translating Thompson's briefs into Italian for distribution in Europe, and putting "blood" into his own appeal for a new trial. He saw himself in the perspective of the lugubrious past of mankind:

> Were not the first Christians believed to be blood drinkers? Yes, they were believed so, and were insulted, tortured, martyrized by the ragged and golden mobs of their time—What chance of fair deal and acquittal those not only innocent first Christians could have had, in being tried by pagans to whom the fact of one being Christian was all the crimes and all the guilts at once and in one? From those times, I could come down through the centuries showing you that the same dealings has been imposed by the golden and the ragged mobs to all those who have discovered, wished, and labored for a little more of truth, justice, freedom, triumph and sublimination of the men, women, and of the life—down, down to this very date. . . .

Reading of the persecutions of witches in the sixteenth century, he came across the name of a French attorney, Bartholomeo ("I am proud of it") who had defended rodents and insects accused of being witches. "It seems that these insects and rats have been more lucky than me. . . ."

THE Massachusetts Supreme Court denied both motions for a new trial; the world was quiet. Vanzetti wrote of this "black hour of vanquishment." John Dos Passos, who visited him in Charlestown December, 1926, after the last denial, wrote: "Vanzetti sits on the bench, thick-chested and calm. . . . He has a look of

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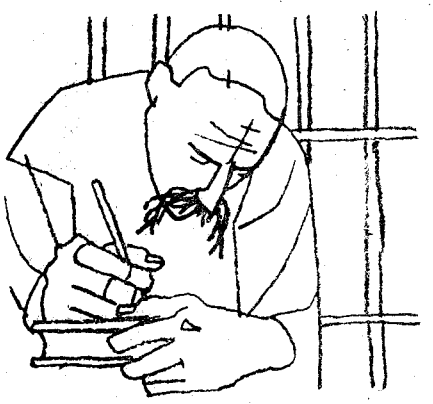
broad-browed calm about him. His lips don't tremble when he smiles under his thick mustache. But it is the calm of a man with his back to the wall. He too glances from time to time over his shoulders, as if to make sure that there is nobody creeping up behind him."

Vanzetti described his prison life at this time (he was working in the shop, making auto licenses): "Before, I could work nine hours, eleven hours a day, and then sit down and write. It poured out straight from the heart. Often I would not have a single correction in an article. But now, word by word, it is so difficult to write in a cell." He told Dos Passos that Charlestown's priest and chaplain had publicly arraigned him. "They hate me because I am an atheist. If I went to them and made myself humble and said: 'Father, I am sorry, please give me absolution,' they would help me. At last I asked to see Father Murphy. He trembled like a leaf. I asked to see him to say to him 'What have I done to him to plot against me that way?' He trembled like a leaf and said nothing, only smooth words."

Passing Christmas locked in his cell, Vanzetti wrote: " . . . My sixth hell-Christmas in prison. I look back; the past was bad enough, I thought, but the worst is yet to come. A bitter Christmas it was." He added, "I know perfectly well that within four months Massachusetts will be ready to burn me." Hearing the nightly noise of a new prison electric plant, he thought of his electrocution.

In January, 1927, a final argument was made before the Massachusetts Supreme Court, which on April 4 again sustained Judge Thayer. All legal steps for a new trial failing, Sacco and Vanzetti were brought from Dedham and Charlestown jails to Dedham courthouse to be sentenced to electrocution.



5. Last Days (April-August, 1927)

VANZETTI had said that, failing a new trial, his would be a "lost cause become ridiculous, shameful, and humiliating." Now, the failure upon him, he would disprove these words; consummating his seven years of prison burgeoning, he would invest himself and his "lost cause" with a new identity. He would make three speeches.

The first he made on April 9, on the occasion of the pronouncement of sentence in Dedham courthouse. Outside, the court was ringed by police with rifles; inside were police with automatic pistols, packed spectators, lawyers, Judge Thayer sitting on the podium, Sacco and Vanzetti in the prisoner cage. The defendants were asked to speak before Thayer pronounced sentence. Sacco spoke briefly and ineffectually. Then Vanzetti stood up and, facing Thayer, spoke extemporaneously in a quiet voice, for forty-five minutes. He reviewed the story of his case. This is his peroration:

> Well, I have already say that I not am guilty of these two crimes, but I never committed a crime in my life, —I have never stolen and I have never killed and I have never spilt blood, and I have fought against crime, and I have fought and I have sacrificed myself even to eliminate the crimes that the law and the church legitimate and sanctify.
>
> This is what I say: I would not wish to a dog or to a snake, to the most low and misfortunate creature of the earth—I would not wish to any of them what I have had to suffer for things that I am not guilty of. I am suffering because I am a radical and indeed I am a radical; I have suffered because I was an Italian, and indeed I am an Italian; I have suffered more for my family and for my beloved than for myself; but I am so convinced to be right that you can only kill me once but if you could execute me two times, and if I could be reborn two other times, I would live again to do what I have done already.
>
> I have finished. Thank you.

Minutes after this, as sentence was being pronounced, Vanzetti interrupted Judge Thayer's words of death and asked for permission to speak again. It was denied. Next day, telling Thompson that it was "the most important" thing he had to say, and "I would have given half my blood to be allowed to speak again. . . . " Vanzetti wrote out his second speech:

> I have talk a great deal of myself but I even forgot to name Sacco. Sacco too is a worker from his boyhood, a skilled worker, lover of work, with a good job and pay, a bank account, a good and lovely wife, two beautiful children and a neat little home at the verge of a wood, near a brook. Sacco is a heart, a faith, a character, a man; a man lover of nature and of mankind. A man who gave all, who sacrifice all to the cause of Liberty and to his love for mankind; money, rest, mundain ambitions, his own wife, his children, himself and his own life. Sacco has never dreamt to steal, never to assassinate. He and I have never brought a morsel of bread to our mouths, from our childhood to today—which has not been gained by the sweat of our brows. Never. His people also are in good position and of good reputation.
>
> Oh yes, I may be more witfull as some have put it, I am a better babbler than he is, but many, many times in hearing his heartful voice ringing a faith sublime, in considering his supreme sacrifice, remembering his heroism I felt small, small at the presence of his greatness and found myself compelled to fight back from my eyes the tears, and quanch my heart trobling to my throat to not weep before him — this man called thief and assassin and doomed. But Sacco's name will live in the hearts of the people and in their gratitude when Katzmann's and yours bones will be dispersed by time, when your name, his name, your laws, institutions, and your false god are but a "deem rememoring of a cursed past in which man was wolf to the man. . . ."

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Towards the end of April, Sacco and Vanzetti were interviewed in the enclosure of Dedham jail — where they had been confined after sentencing—by Philip D. Stong, a young reporter for the North American Newspaper Alliance. "Both men," wrote Stong, "expect to die. They say so, and the conviction is written in grave, serene characters on Vanzetti's face. . . . A ferocious mustache covers an expressive, smiling mouth. The stamp of thought is in every feature; the marks of the man whom strong intelligence has made an anchorite." With occasional interpolations from Sacco, Vanzetti talks. He has been writing, he says, about student suicides: "I think Dr. Freud wrong when he say student kill himself to make someone sorrow. I right that student kill himself because he have sick mind which wish make someone sorrow. When he cannot make no one sorrow, he kill himself in anger at world which pay him no attention in despair." Sacco mentions his own suicidal feelings four years ago at Boston Psychopathic Hospital. Vanzetti reminisces of a Charlestown convict who had killed his wife for infidelity: "He says to me once, 'Vanzetti, you know what I think of all night — what I see every night? My wife, my home!' And these men take all from him."

UP from the Dedham shops comes a file of gray convicts, arms folded, faces expressionless — a rhythm of steps and faces. "We're capitalists," Vanzetti says, smiling and pointing to the workers. (Now that he and Sacco are under sentence of death, they are no longer given work.) "We have home, we eat, don't do no work. We're non-producers—live off other men's work; when Libertarians make speech, they calling Nick and me names."

Stong, previously unopinionated on Sacco and Vanzetti, after fifteen minutes' conversation believed them innocent and the thought of their execution "became almost intolerable" to him. Vanzetti caught this feeling; looking at Stong, not declaiming, simply trying to reassure the reporter, he made his third speech:

> If it had not been for these things I might have live out my life talking on street corners to scorning men. I might have die unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life can we hope to do such work for tolerance, for joostice, for man's understanding of man, as now we do by an accident. . . .
>
> Our words—our lives—our pains—nothing! The taking of our lives—lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler—all! That last moment belongs to us—that agony is our triumph!

THESE THREE speeches are Vanzetti's conscious effort, in the face of death, to remain known after death by constructing from his ideas, emotions and the English language—all he had learned in the past seven years—a mausoleum of words. Words of manifold appeal; words which, as Vanzetti said of Marat's, "strike the old, the present, and all possible injustice"; words which, aside from their ideology, may be read for their poetry (two of the speeches are included in the *Anthology of American Poetry*). In the future, these words will almost certainly be the one memory of the Sacco-Vanzetti case that our permanent culture will preserve.

Viewed chronologically, Vanzetti's mausoleum shows a progressive construction. In the first speech, he is the revolutionary at bay—confronting the society he wished to vanquish but which is now vanquishing him—proclaiming with a virile, adamantine ring his defiance and radical identity. Alone, he is strong in his loneliness: this is Mazzini in his exile (Vanzetti wrote that Mazzini "happened to be born where I was born") and Debs at Terre Haute (Vanzetti had met and admired Debs). In his second speech Vanzetti, incorporating Sacco, has broken his loneliness, augmented his self, and gained several new selves. Sacco, like Vanzetti, is an anarchist and a fellow prisoner. Unlike Vanzetti, he is a "skilled worker, lover of work"; possessor of a bank account, a family and a home near a wood and a brook; ingenuously and non-intellectually loving nature, he is a symbol of that Mother Nature whom Vanzetti has always striven to join. This speech is more diffuse, its tone softer and more feminine, than the preceding one.

Vanzetti's third speech recapitulates in compressed prose—there is not a superfluous word—the preceding two. Beginning with the "I" of Vanzetti, it passes over to the "we" of Sacco and Vanzetti. It equilibrates the violent and passive parts of Vanzetti's nature: to a passive "tolerance," "joostice," and "man's understanding of man," it juxtaposes an active "scorning men" and "agony." And then it proceeds to transcend everything Vanzetti has previously said. Many facing death have proclaimed defiance, and enumerated the forces on their side. But to say that one's physical annihilation is a victory and an immortality—that is prepotently awesome. Many have wished to say it, few have done so. Commenting on the immediate impact of these words, Upton Sinclair wrote:

> Pass on, Bartolomeo Vanzetti, your work is done! . . . You have spoken the noblest words heard in America in the two generations since Abraham Lincoln died! You have achieved what is called the "grand manner" so rare in literature! That simplicity whereby men become as little children, and enter into the kingdom of heaven; that dignity which causes the critics to bow their haughty heads; that tenderness which touches the heart, that rapture which fires it, that sublimity which brings men to their knees!

Words may express two meanings: conscious and unconscious. The splendid impact of Vanzetti's words is fixed: may we not also see their genesis as an unconscious wish for death? In death, Vanzetti not only finally expiates the guilt for his mother's death, but finally joins with her. One of the techniques of psychoanalysis for baring the unconscious is to begin with conscious thoughts and then to go on to free associations (the following up of one spontaneous saying with another). If the associations remain uninhibited, eventually unconscious thoughts are reached. While Stong quietly and neutrally listens, Vanzetti indulges in a kind of free association on the death of loved ones: "I right that student kill himself because he have sick mind which wish to make some-

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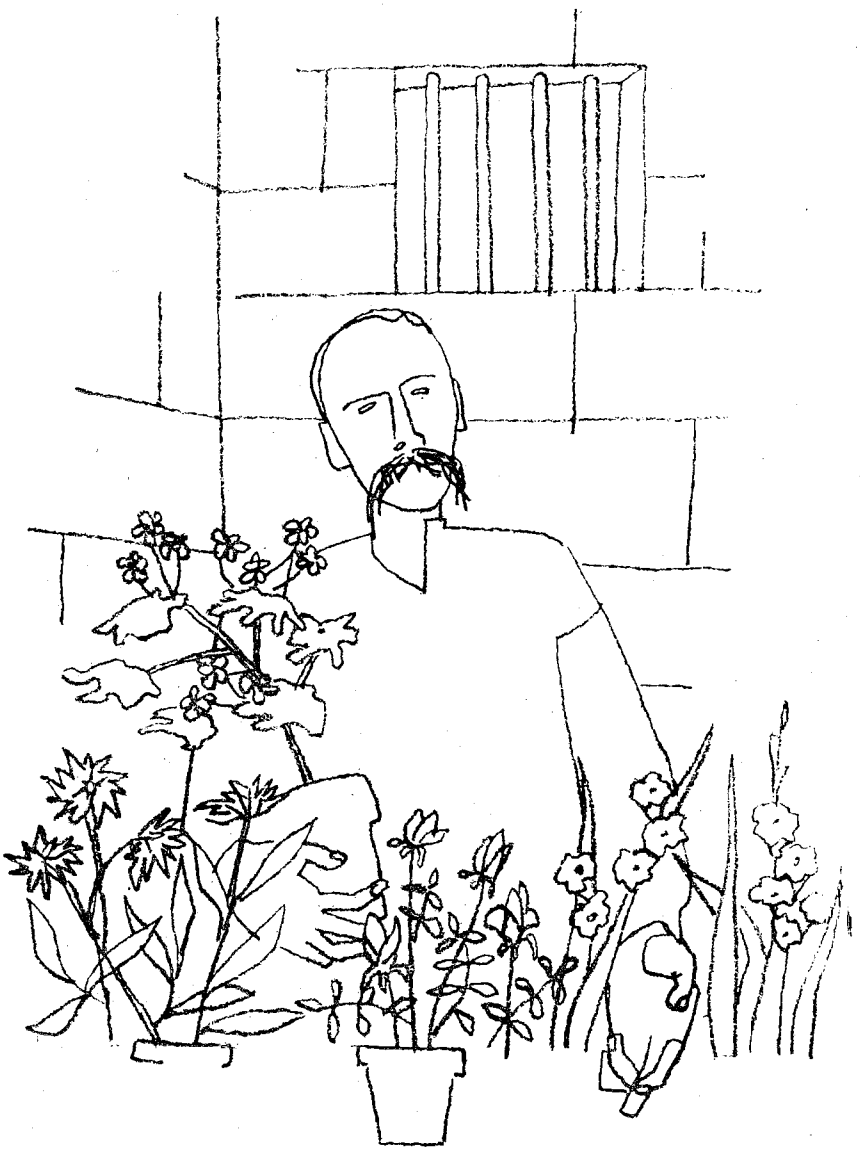

Drawing by Gwathmey

one sorrow"; the words of the wife-killer, "Vanzetti, you know what I think of all night—what I see every night? My wife, my home. . . ." The line of convicts momentarily interrupts Vanzetti's association. Then, unrehearsed, unpremeditated—Vanzetti's most unconscious speech, one of the most unconscious of all famous speeches—he speaks of what comes immediately to his mind.

IN THE months between the sentencing on April 9 and the execution date, set for July 9, the American mothers sent Sacco and Vanzetti fruits and flowers. Vanzetti described his Dedham cell: "My window here is peopled of recipients, it is a riot of blissing colors and beauties forms: a granium plant, a tulip, and plant from Mrs. Evans. White flowers, pink carnations, roseate peaches, buds, and flowers, bush — yellow flowers from Mrs. Jack, and a boquet of May flowers from Mrs. Winslow." To his English teacher, Mrs. MacMehan, he wrote, "Well, send me some flowers please, some Mayflowers if you can afford. The whitest flowers of your soul and the reddest flowers of your heart within the folds of letters." The flowers and his thirty-ninth birthday on June 11 moved him to variformed memories of childhood in the verdant and flower-dappled garden of his home and valley of Villafalletto; and of the last stanza of Gori's revolutionary hymn, *May 1st*, which he translated for Mrs. Jack:

> Give flowers to the rebels failed
> With glances revealed to the aurora
> To the gayard that struggles and works,
> To the vagrant poet that dies.

Gori, Vanzetti explains, was the "dying poet."

Freed from prison work, experiencing the greatest leisure of his life, Vanzetti smoked "like a Turk" and wrote letters and articles. He read the first volume of Beard's *The Rise of American Civilization,* therein learning of the origins of that America which he, as an unskilled worker, had helped industrialize, whose language he had learned, and which was now killing him. He read the news, and his global vistas grimly darkened. To Mrs. Maude Pettyjohn he wrote on May 26, 1927:

> Of course we will soon have war and worse than ever. French has pass a law which militarized every man—woman—and children of the nation during war. Each other nation will do the same. To strike civil populations with weaps of war: iron, fire, poisons, gasses and diseases. Of course the rich will fly to the mountains . . . the poor will be compelled by their poverty and laws to live where they are. . . . They will be striken and destroyed by millions, children, youngs, olds, men and women.

He and Sacco occupied adjoining cells and were allowed one daily hour together in Dedham's enclosure, where they played *bocce*, an Italian bowling game. A spring sun shone strongly. "They're certainly bearing up extraordinary," said the warden of Dedham jail. "When they get their hour they laugh and talk a blue streak. They enjoy the sun."

AND now, though one part of Vanzetti wished and was prepared to die, the part which had burgeoned and achieved the prose of a Lincoln wished to live and petitioned Governor Alvin Fuller for executive clemency. The Governor began a private investigation, then formed an advisory committee composed of President Lowell of Harvard University, President Stratton of M.I.T., and former Probate Judge Grant. Meanwhile, he postponed execution to August 10. Vanzetti, for all his anarchism, still believed in the goodness of authority figures, and he tensely followed the investigation of the Governor and the committee: "We have already hoped in several appeals all of them repulsed. Of course we hope in Justice. What did

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they? Now that we are compelled to hope no longer in them of course we begin to hope in Governor Fuller. Victor Hugo was almost right in saying that hope would be the last goddess were not for desperation. . . ."

On July 1, Sacco and Vanzetti were transferred from Dedham to the Cherry Hill death-cell section of Charlestown. This was unexpected—usually, transfer took place two weeks before execution—and again, as at Bridgewater, Vanzetti lost many of his books. Vanzetti had been composed, but now his anxiety increased; shortly after the transfer, in protest against the Governor's attitude toward some of his witnesses, he went on a hunger strike. In the midst of his fast—on July 27—Governor Fuller visited him in Charlestown's guard room, then hurriedly left to receive Lindbergh, promising to return. Thompson urged Vanzetti to eat to get strength to talk to Fuller, and Vanzetti drank milk and then vomited it. The Governor returned a few days later and talked to Vanzetti for several hours in the evening. After he left, Vanzetti wrote: "And I like to tell you that he gave me a good heartfelt handshake before he left. I may be wrong, but I don't believe that a man like that is going to burn us on a case like ours." On the final threat of forced feeding, he began to eat.

A FEW days later, on August 3, the Governor, following the recommendation of his advisory committee, denied Vanzetti's appeal. In a hand tremulous with anxiety and the weakness of fasting, Vanzetti wrote in a jagged and irregular script: "Governor Alvin T. Fuller is murderer as Thayer, Katzmann, the state perjurors, and all the other. He shake hands with me like a brother, make me believe he was honestly intentioned, and that he had not sent the three carbarn-boy to have no escuse to save us."

The night of Fuller's decision, Sacco and Vanzetti were moved from the cells in Cherry Hill into the cells of the death house. As he transferred, Vanzetti "got a glance to the nighty, starry night—it was so long I did seen it before—and thought it was my last glance to the stars." Preparing for death, he wrote terse, uniform notes to the American mothers: "This is just to tell you goodbye and bless you for all you have done for us."

There was a rash of demonstrations in behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti in the cities of Europe, South America and the United States. The Sacco-Vanzetti defense, headed by Arthur Hill (Thompson had retired), and including a young Italian lawyer, Michael Musmanno, went on making appeals to different courts. To permit these to be heard, Governor Fuller, on August 10—forty-five minutes before the scheduled electrocution — granted Sacco and Vanzetti a twelve-day stay.

VANZETTI, numb, could scarcely read or write. The courts rejected the defense appeals. On August 19, Michael Musmanno visited Vanzetti in his cell and told him the U.S. Supreme Court had refused to intervene. When Vanzetti heard this, his pupils dilated wide like saucers and glittered — part of a primitive autonomic nervous reaction against peril. Then the violent part of him flared, and he cried: "Get the million men! Get the million men! Who is making all the noise around here?" He asked for a radio to be placed in his cell so he could tell his story to the world; all the rest of the day, standing in his death cell, he called for the million men. It was almost certainly at this time that he wrote the following to Thompson:

> New Era year one. My enemies make me aim to their cannons, shooting at me every night to kill me. Please, send this instruction to the Boston Defense Committee as quickly as possible.
>
> "Dear Friends of the Committee:
>
> I hope you have radiocasted at once my order of mobilization to all the nations of the world. Big corps of men are in march; if I perceived well last night. Take all the protective measure to the crossing of the Rio Grande and Panama Canal: but use the coasts most you can. Renew my notes to the King of Italy and the Pope. I want all my witness as well. Inform me by wireless, and immediately, of each move and particular."

Madness; and as always violence limited to just words—no one moved, no one was hurt. Previously, it had taken five months to heal the madness; this time Vanzetti regained control within twenty-four hours—and with forty-eight hours to live—experienced two of the last and most meaningful talks of his life.

The first was with his sister Luigia. Vanzetti had written her to come to him before he died. Following the same route as her brother, she had taken a train from Villafalletto across France, and then an Atlantic boat to New York, where she arrived on August 19, 1927; a frail, small, middle-aged woman, plainly dressed, with a golden medallion of the Madonna about her neck. Stepping ashore, her first words to reporters were: "I will ask him [Vanzetti] to see a priest and return to the faith of his childhood, of those happy days before he left us and became a radical and an atheist." She motored to Boston and, on August 20, after an absence of nineteen years, was reunited with her famous and doomed brother in his death cell. By a special permission of Warden Hendry, the cell door was opened so that Vanzetti could embrace Luigia. There is no record of what was said, but it must have been an unbearably poignant interview: loving his sister, Vanzetti rejected her request to return to the religion of his family; became —with Sacco—the first condemned prisoner in Charlestown's history to refuse a priest. On August 21, Vanzetti wrote: "Since I saw her [Luigia], my heart lost a little of its steadiness. The thought that she will have to take my death to our mother's grave, it is horrible to me. . . ."

THE second talk was on execution day, August 22. From among the many who through the years had fought to save him, Vanzetti asked to see William Thompson. Thompson, retired from the case and then in New Hampshire, immediately motored to Boston and by early evening of August 22 had reached Charlestown prison. Vanzetti was in a narrow cell opening immediately on the electrocution chamber, and when Thompson arrived, he arose from a small table where he had been writing, reached through the bars

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and, warmly smiling, vigorously shook his visitor's hand. Thompson sat down on a chair in front of the cell. With execution a few hours off — in a scene which has been likened to *Phaedo*—the two men talked through the bars.

THEY talked of the case. Vanzetti reiterated his innocence and asked Thompson to "clear my name." Then Vanzetti spoke of the history of movements for human betterment, among which was early Christianity. Thompson remarked that the essence of the appeal of Christianity "was the supreme confidence shown by Jesus in the truth of His own views by forgiving, even when on the cross, His enemies, persecutors and slanderers." Since his arrest and "crowning with thorns" in Brockton Police Station, since the Plymouth trial and the defense by "Judas" Vahey, Vanzetti had felt parallels between himself and Christ; at these words of Thompson, the conversation reached its climax. Recorded Thompson:

> Now, for the first and only time in the conversation, Vanzetti showed a feeling of personal resentment against his enemies. He spoke with eloquence of his sufferings, and asked me whether I thought it possible that he could forgive those who had persecuted and tortured him through seven years of inexpressible misery. I told him he knew how deeply I sympathized with him, and that I had asked him to reflect upon the career of One infinitely superior to myself and to him, and upon a force infinitely greater than the force of hate and revenge. I said that in the long run, the force to which the world would respond was the force of love and not of hate, and that I was suggesting to him to forgive his enemies, not for their sakes, but for his own peace of mind, and also because an example of such forgiveness would in the end be more powerful to win adherence to his cause or to a belief in his innocence than anything else that could be done.

The aging American, with years still to live, was witnessing the death of many of his ideals of *noblesse oblige* and fair play. The still-young Italian about to die was sure in his faith, yet resentful that he must die —wishing to live—unsure how to manage his anger and violence. Now the American advised him to imitate the example of Christ.

Thompson arose after his last words, and he and Vanzetti stood gazing at each other for a minute or two in silence. Vanzetti finally said that he would think of what Thompson had said. He then spoke briefly of the evils of present-day society, and the two men parted.

> In this closing scene [said Thompson] the impression of him [Vanzetti], which had been gaining in my mind for three years, was deepened and confirmed—that he was a man of powerful mind, and unselfish disposition, of seasoned character, and of devotion to high ideals. There was no sign of breaking down or of terror at approaching death. At parting he gave me a firm clasp of the hand, and a steady glance, which revealed unmistakably the depth of his feeling and the firmness of his self-control.

After Thompson left, Vanzetti sat for several hours alone, unmoving and quiet in his brightly lit death cell, watched by a guard. Beginning at midnight he heard the professional criminal, Medarios, and then Nick Sacco leave their cells, adjacent to his. When the guards came to his cell, he knew his fellow prisoners were both dead. A guard holding each of his arms, he walked briskly into the death chamber. Setting a prison precedent, he shook hands with the warden, the deputy warden, Dr. McLoughlin, and two prison guards. "I thank you for everything you have done for me," he said. Then he sat down in the electric chair, and the guards adjusted the straps to his body. As one guard knelt down and was adjusting the straps to the bare flesh of his right leg, he said firmly and gently, "I now wish to forgive some people for what they are doing to me." Seconds later the guard threw the switch and he was dead.

His body was then cremated, and so most of Vanzetti diffused into the American air as water and carbon dioxide. Luigia took the urn containing his ashes back to Villafalletto and interred it in the oft-remembered garden of his home. His memory lives on most seminally among writers of American fiction. Some of the ablest American writers have written of him, and yet as *The Legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti* said in 1948, "The total meaning of Vanzetti's personality and thought has thus far been explored only in the most tentative fashion." Perhaps, as the *Legacy* suggests, in the future an American writer of the first magnitude will take Bartolomeo Vanzetti as his primary subject.

In After Time

In after time, when all this dream
Becomes pure dream, and roughest years
Lie down among the suckling grass,
And spring up sentient upon the meadow;

In that after time of great-born Aprils,
Beyond a century of tatters and of malice,
When love has thrown out fear and madness,
The eyes will see the sun as wonder.

In after time, when rage and chaos
Lose their sovereign force, new dream
Will lift the shining life to spirit
And mate the make of man to merit.

Then shall holy summers come; then laughter
God-like shake upon a dewy morning;
Then fullness grow, big with purpose,
And man shall know again his richness.

RICHARD EBERHART

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THEATRE

Harold Clurman

AS I HAVE HAD occasion to remark many times before, a stage play can attract by virtue of many different elements which to those who think of the theatre mainly as "words" may seem adventitious. Thus the new Rodgers and Hammerstein (plus Joseph Fields) musical *The Flower Drum Song* (St. James Theatre) is winning through the sweetness of its cast—particularly its leading lady, Miyoshi Umeki, whose gentle semi-conscious humor acts with slow enchantment. Miss Umeki is not a "personality"—she is a person. Her charm permeates the atmosphere like a softly enveloping breath of nature.

The plot — based on a novel by C. Y. Lee—deals with the older generation of Chinese in San Francisco and the younger. The former have old-world grace, the latter are all be-bop. It is another variation of the Rodgers-Hammerstein light-hearted optimism, assuring us with Dutch-uncle confidence that "a hundred million miracles happen every day."

This might prove cloying if it were not for the people we see before us: the actors—Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiian. Some of them are plainly amateurs, all of them are gracious human beings. The leading man, Ed Kenney, has a fine voice and an attractive manner. One of the actors—Larry Blyden—is all American and he too, playing a not altogether sympathetic character, is charming.

THE DISENCHANTED (Coronet) is a dramatization of Budd Schulberg's novel by Harvey Breit and the novelist himself. It is presumably the story of Scott Fitzgerald's collaboration on a silly movie with a young scenarist who watches the famous writer's tragic decline with frustration, anguish and compassion.

The play is weakened by the fact that the character of Fitzgerald or whoever the writer in the play may represent, exists on the stage by reputation only. We know—or are supposed to take for granted—that he is an important writer, but the figure we are presented with is a generalization. He has no real individuality, no personal identity. Nothing that happens to him therefore can really be significant or moving. The same is true of the lady who is supposed to be the writer's wife (ostensibly the now fabulous Zelda). She too is a cliché.

What life exists on the stage is supplied by the actors: Jason Robards, Jr., as the writer and George Grizzard as his juvenile collaborator. Robards is a truly good actor: he fulfills the requirements of each scene very well indeed, and he has power, But he plays too close to the line of the writing, and since this writing is conventional the performance does not make a man.

The play states a point: the artist who deteriorates does so, not because he "sells out" at the end of his career, but because there has been a flaw in integrity from the beginning. This is interesting and probably valid, but a point does not make a play.

THE Old Vic production of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (Broadway Theatre) is sweet. I have used this adjective earlier in this report—and it is a dangerous one since it has acquired pejorative connotations. But I mean what I say: *Twelfth Night* is a sweet play.

There are two noteworthy performances: that of Barbara Jefford as Viola —the best looking and the most endearing girl-boy I have ever seen in the role—and Richard Wordsworth as Malvolio who somehow makes that classic prig lovable as well as funny. There is something fetching too in Judi Dench's pert Maria: she has a laughing English countenance and she moves beautifully. But what accounts for the attractive dewiness of the production is not so much these performances—delightful though they are—as an over-all candor which seems to emanate from a characteristically British quality of forebearance and good nature.

The English don't demand that life be an ecstasy or passion; they want it to be *nice*—even-tempered, friendly, affectionate. They desire people to be patient with themselves and one another. Something of this is in the play itself and the present actors embody it. They all look rather splendid; they wear their tastefully designed costumes with easy

Is úar geimred; at-racht gáeth

(From the Finn-Cycle. Based on Gerard Murphy's text and translation from the Gaelic.)

Winter is ice-time; wind is rising;
Fierce not-to-be-stayed stag is rousing;
The cleftless cliff is not warm tonight
Though the dashing stag bells on it.

The stag of Slievecarran of counsels,
Now in no hollow he'll settle;
On Aughty's cold crag the stag
Cocks ears to the choiring wolf-pack.

I Caílte, and dark Díarmait,
Oscar too, whetted and light,
On nights of great cold, through the late hour
Would give ear to the wolf choir.

The brown stag sleeps deep, in truth,
With his side pressed to Corran's earth
As though he were under Tuns water
On a sharp cold night at a late hour.

Today I am aged, ancient;
I know few men now to behold them;
Once I was not weak at wielding
An edged spear in the ice-sharp morning.

I tender thanks to Heaven's King,
Son of Mary, she a virgin,
Many times I made armies be still,
Though tonight I am pierced with cold.

W. S. MERWIN

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assurance and most of them speak the verses with a lack of self-consciousness which comes from sound training and proper habit.

GRAHAM GREENE's *The Power and the Glory* adapted by the Englishman Denis Canaan and the Frenchman Pierre Bost (Phoenix) is the story of a "bad" priest—a drunkard who has gotten a peasant girl with child—but a priest, nevertheless, who still struggles valiantly to keep religious practices and faith alive under a rabidly anti-clerical Mexican regime, when the saying of Mass and the very presence of an officiating priest is severely punishable.

The point of the story may be summarized as follows: though the priest is himself a culpable character, he is protected by the humble folk of the community because he does God's work. The people — even the sorriest criminals —will do anything not to betray him because they need a man of God, however blemished, to stand among them.

One need not be a Catholic to respect this thesis. But the play fails to touch me because what it creates at best is the decadent atmosphere of benighted Mexican villages rather than any spiritual mood. That there are such martyrs as Green's hero I do not doubt, and that people will continue to yearn for the symbols as well as the content of their religious heritage even under the most abject circumstances is historically undeniable. But such convictions on the author's part and my readiness to accede to them have little bearing on my main objection to the play, which is that what finally emerges from it is a man-hunt—one sordid person tracked by a group of sordid persons. I neither believe in nor care about either—apart from the lurid fascination of the exotic squalor in which they move. This sense of moral and physical degradation in the environment was more fully projected in the London production two years ago, but the company at the Phoenix does well with it too.

Walled City

I'm going to re-draw myself
with hard clear outlines
cold as asphalt, shinier than tin.
I shall be the envy of the pangolin.
The rolled up porpentine is not
    better fortified,
the armadillo will be jealous of
    my skin.
Come unto me, little children, as far
    as the fence,
but *Noli Me Tangere* within.

DILYS LAING

MUSIC

Lester Trimble

THE Contemporary Music Society, which was founded five years ago to foster the performance and understanding of contemporary music, has sprung into increased activity this season. Under its auspices, Leopold Stokowski conducted a concert a short time ago at Carnegie Hall in which the Vaughan Williams Ninth Symphony was given its American première. More recently, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the conductor presented nine contemporary works for smaller orchestral combinations, giving most of them either their local or world premières.

Of the two evenings, I found the latter more interesting. The Vaughan Williams symphony, though the high point of the first concert, proved to be a faint echo of some of the composer's earlier, more vital symphonies. As the last major work of a distinguished and recently deceased musician, it had to be played, and I wanted to hear it. But it was sad to contemplate how, in the fatigue of age, the composer was retracing ground he had already covered more energetically in other symphonies.

The Metropolitan Museum concert, though its program listed no names of the magnitude of Williams', produced some works by less familiar composers in a curiously piquant East-West context. The Western composers, Henry Cowell (American) and Colin McPhee (Canadian), had been influenced, respectively, by the music of Persia and Bali, countries which they had visited. Shukichi Mitsukuri, the Japanese, and Chou Wen-chung, the Chinese-American, had each tried to combine Oriental poetic thinking with a Western style of expression. A young, Egyptian-born composer, Halim El-Dabh, who recently composed a score for Martha Graham's *Clytemnestra,* focused upon a drum which is popular in many parts of the Middle East, the derabucca, and wrote a *Fantasia-Tahmeel* for that instrument plus string orchestra. The composer played the drum. Alan Hovhaness, a Massachusetts composer whose highly personal style lays emphasis upon Armenian modes, was represented by a delicately spun percussion piece called *October Mountain.* Odeon Partos, a Budapest-born, Israeli composer, contributed a piece called *Yiskor* (In Memoriam) for viola and string orchestra. The only works of strictly Western orientation were Malloy Miller's *Prelude for Percussion Instruments,* which I found quite dazzling, and Walter Piston's well-crafted but rather dry *Divertimento for Nine Instruments.*

In general, the program showed that a true fusion of Eastern and Western styles is hard to achieve, and that, especially in the case of westernized Oriental composers, the result is likely to be Impressionism. Chou Wen-chung's *To a Wayfarer,* for clarinet, strings, harp and percussion, was a case in point. Based on an anonymous Chinese poem, circa 600 A.D., its unusual formal construction led it along in dark, breathing gasps, with low, string dissonances laying down a background for a sort of monody in the clarinet. Here and there, a harp glissando or a high string tremolo brightened the textures, and emphasized the composer's affection for colorism and mood illustration.

THE Mitsukuri *Ten Haikus* were similarly based on Oriental poetry—in this case Japanese. The poems, which had such titles as *Seeing myself reclining in a vast plain* and *My heat-twisted shadow*, were of the classic, short genre, and the music mirrored them in minuscule, impressionistic puffs of color.

McPhee's *Nocturne* for Chamber Orchestra, and Cowell's *Persian Set* seemed to fall into the category of deliberate exoticism. The McPhee was basically Impressionistic in manner, and modal, with a strong hint of the Balinese gamelan, which has influenced this composer's music in other instances. The *Persian Set* was written by Cowell in 1956 and 1957 while he was staying in Teheran as a guest of the Iranian Government. It is flavored with exciting, repetitious rhythms of an exotic cast, and evokes the general atmosphere of an oriental bazaar. I do not find it as convincing as other Cowell works, because of its feeling of "applied exoticism" in the *Scheherazade* tradition, rather than of an absorption or fusion of styles. But it is a pretty piece, and roundly entertaining.

I should say, too, that Stokowski's direction of these works was little short of miraculous. Regardless of the grouping of instruments, each ensemble played

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as if it had rehearsed for weeks (which it had not), and been stung into an exquisitely refined and dynamic opening-night response. Stokowski's ability to bring forth such performances is hardly news at this point, but it never fails to astound.

ART

Maurice Grosser

ELIE NADELMAN's figurines, on show at the Hewett Gallery through December, were done in an attempt to solve the contemporary sculptor's most serious problem—how sculpture is to survive without a market. For sculptors, our times have been uncompromisingly hard. The human figure, sculpture's consecrated subject which even prudish Victorians permitted on public buildings, has become too risky, costly and ornate for our own architecture's economical style, and as a result commissions have almost vanished. Nadelman sought another market by publishing his work, like a book or record, in multiple copies for domestic consumption. Copies of painting in reproduction are no good. One has only to compare a color print with the original painting to discover this. Sculpture, on the other hand, when it is made from molds, is already a sort of replica, and if one wishes to multiply the process, the succeeding copies are also replicas with every virtue of the original. Thus, by casting small figures in multiple editions and inexpensive materials, Nadelman hoped to preserve the art of serious sculpture for domestic uses, now that there was no longer a demand for public pieces.

The idea was not new nor do I think it has turned out to be very fruitful. But the stuff itself is extraordinarily handsome—single female figures and groups, five to nineteen inches high, in papier-mâché and terra cotta, painted and unpainted, glazed and unglazed. The figures themselves have something of the heavy-bodied, quasi-cylindrical style one finds in so much of the 1920 work, from Maillol, Lachaise and Manship, from Picasso's "Classical" nudes and the painting of Bellows and Guy Pène du Bois, on to the style's unfortunate apotheosis in the Paris 1925 *Exposition des Arts Decoratifs*. But the small scale of Nadelman's pieces and the boldness and delicacy of their veiled modeling remove all the doctrinaire heaviness inherent in this classic revival style. One is inescapably reminded of the figurines of Tanagra which, apart from their extraordinary grace, these figures resemble not at all.

ON SEEING the Alfred Maurer retrospective—through December at the Bertha Schaefer Gallery—one cannot help comparing it with the retrospective recently held at the Downtown Gallery of the figure painting of Max Weber. Both painters, as young men in Paris, enthusiastically joined forces with the revolutionaries of modern art. Weber was the more determinedly modern: if one related the dates of the pictures in his recent show to the various styles in which they were painted, one discovered that in this sequence of Parisian fashions Weber was consistently up to date. Beginning with a nude of 1907 in a manner then practiced by Suzanne Valadon, the painter seems to have passed through the influence of Cézanne (in a handsome life-class study in orange and green) to discover in 1910 Picasso's African Negro style; then on in 1913 through a form of Futurism to arrive in 1917 (the two best pictures of the show) at the bright-colored Cubism with spots of Picasso's ballet *Parade*; on in 1932 to Picasso's "Classical" heavy figure manner; and finally, in 1945, to something that looks strangely like the wiggly line of Archile Gorky. Apart from the painter's topical versatility, the most extraordinary thing about this sequence is the way in which he has managed to impose on each successive manner his own trademark in the form of a stereotype of the Jewish face.

Maurer's retrospective has less variety. Starting with a portrait of a woman in kimono of about 1901, in subdued tonalities and Japanese space division that show Whistler's influence, he passed around 1908 through a brilliant Fauve period with the most beautiful and gaudy colors, to arrive in the mid-twenties at the analytical Cubism he never thereafter abandoned—a style in which the lines and planes of the objects painted, generalized and extended, form the network that is the picture's composition. The colors are varied, the line simplified but not in the least mechanical. The work, like Weber's, reflects the most advanced in European art. Both men were caught, bedazzled by the new techniques, like Indians at the coming of the white man. But where Weber, disoriented, stayed on the side lines and pilfered, Maurer understood, assimilated and joined. His work may be not as brilliant or as talented as Weber's, but its elements seem more digested and their expression more natural and sincere. And the best of it—like his elongated self-portrait in a soft hat and his Cubist synthesis of Gilbert Stuart's *Washington*—is difficult to forget.

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taining exhibition in many years. Dali has always been a master of the gag; witness the works by which one knows him best, his depictions of the unruly world of dreams painted in a serene and decorous pre-Impressionist style. A similar marriage of incongruities dominates the present exhibition. Here references to the *Sistine Madonna* and to Velasquez' celebrated *Infanta* replace the Freudian imagery of his earlier work, and this homage to Renaissance painting is for the most part executed in zigzag brush strokes claimed to describe the path of atomic particles in a cloud chamber—a wonderful amalgamation of photographic realism, abstract calligraphy, and current ideas of physics. The largest picture in the show has an even more extraordinary triple-take. From close up it appears completely non-objective — a uniform diagonal grillwork of white and black circles on a background of gray bespangled with splinter-like brush strokes in pink. From half way across the room the pattern of strokes becomes a Madonna figure, while from still greater distance the black and white circles are seen to be a huge magnification of the dots in a halftone print representing an enormous ear (the catalogue says an angel's).

Dali has always been an excellent miniaturist. Even this biggest picture derives part of its quality from its resemblance to a minute image mechanically enlarged, and among the other canvases the small ones are the best. The mixture of calligraphic brushwork with meticulous representation is most convincing when the scale is small; the smoothly painted passages of flesh in certain of the larger pictures retain something of the oil-cloth quality so unpleasant in his devotional pictures of recent years.

These works, presumably designed in conformity with Catholic dogma, nevertheless show evidence of commercialism deeply distressing in so vigorous an artist. The distinguishing marks of commercialism are a humorless and respectful treatment of conventional subject matter, a style of execution adapted from familiar masterpieces having established value and, most inescapable of all, an overworked surface with insensitive texture. These marks have been visible in Dali's recent paintings. And it is a pleasure to find in the present exhibition less of such commercialized surfacing and more of the playful and technically unconstrained inventiveness of his earlier years.

FILMS

Robert Hatch

IT IS grotesque how the makers of *I Want To Live!* have seized upon an issue and missed the point. This is a brilliantly constructed picture, and it contains the most appalling agony I have ever seen on a public screen: its primary message is that Barbara Graham should not have been executed by the State of California for a murder she did not commit. Its secondary messages are that a lurid, irresponsible press is a handicap to justice and that the police should not employ *agents provocateurs* to trap defendants into false confessions. Is there anyone in the audience who could possibly disagree? *I Want To Live!* would seem to be a lesson in how to take advantage of a hot topic without burning your fingers, how to peddle stomach-turning horror under the guise of social conscience.

The issue, of course, is capital punishment, but it turns out that the picture is by no means opposed to that — it bundles Mrs. Graham's co-defendants off to the gas chamber without a second thought. And the script takes such pains to clear its heroine of any slightest complicity in or knowledge of the murder that the story swings on coincidence abetted by ambition and greed. But the carelessness of justice in California — if indeed it is careless — could as well be exposed without the sickening suspense and documentary horror of the closing scenes. Had the purpose of the picture been to argue that capital punishment is an inexcusable barbarism under all circumstances, I would have accepted the revolting details as a necessary demonstration of what it is we are talking about. But without that purpose these details become as obscenely sensational as the press hysterics the picture so piously inveighs against.

Ironically, it is the *innocence* of the heroine that makes her death agonies offensive, and there is reason to believe that the real Barbara Graham was much more closely associated with the murder than this reconstruction of her case would have you believe. Whatever the truth, Mrs. Graham was not convicted merely on the basis of entrapment and the uncorroborated evidence of her alleged associates.

I won't recommend the picture because I think that it is revolting to no artistic or moral purpose. But I will say that if you go you will see good work. Susan Hayward plays the Graham role with an animal vigor that is both appealing and frightening (it is also sentimentalized "heart of gold" on occasion, but that is not her fault). The supporting cast is almost surrealistically vivid and the production has been put together in the crisp style of good crime (or sports) reporting.

A l'Aube

A door has opened
and a shadow passed.
The clouds move smoothly,
reassuringly.

The first bird greets the day,
not knowing that
a cat is waiting somewhere
down below.

I rise as early as the bird
and gay,
for no good reason
other than the light

that dawns at dawn
and then again will fade
like immortality
and even pride.

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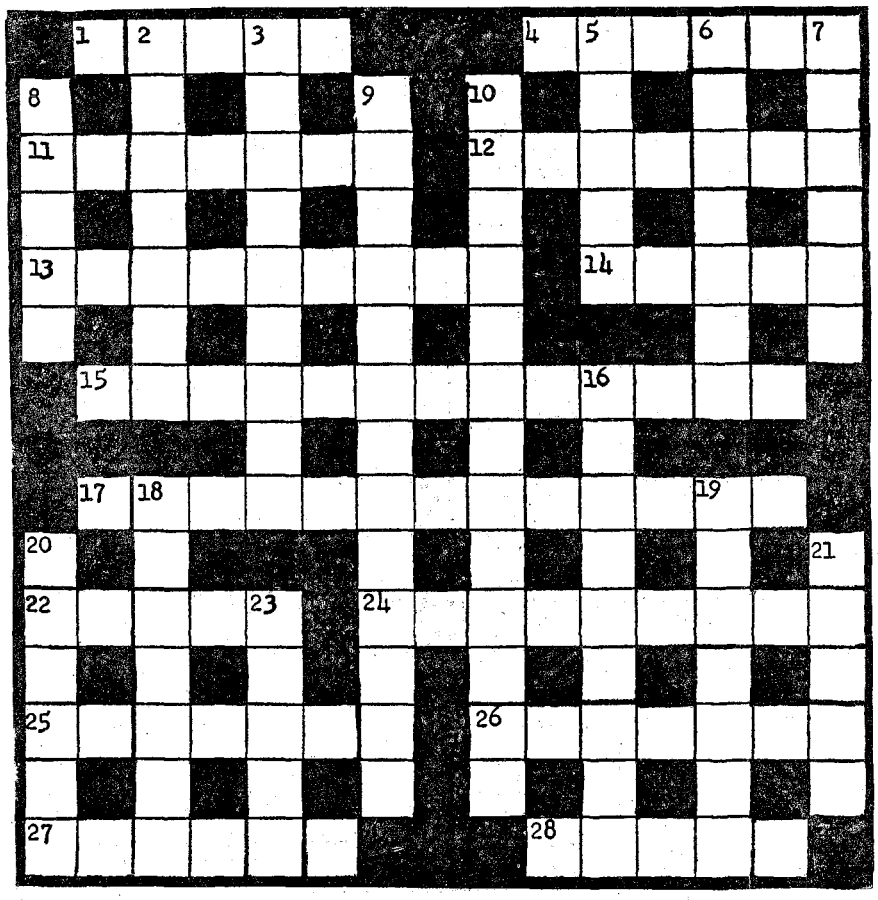
Crossword Puzzle No. 800

By FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS:

1 It was blown in "Sea Fever." (5)
4 Heaps of treads. (6)
11 Heard rumblings, and inside information as to what heard them. (7)
12 Almost horsy-bovine, with a twelve-hour day. (7)
13 Customers in a body. (9)
14 Shoot, son! (5)
15 Robinson cut it out of the object of the drive. (13)
17 It seems the inspector lied in showing such partiality. (13)
22 See 28 across
24 Having to pay for not being dressed? (9)
25 Such glassware should have a fast turn-over rate. (7)
26 Dodger-type description? (7)
27 Freedom to enter the course. (6)
28 and 22 In Western productions does one try to improve part? (5,5)

DOWN:

2 Ambulatory. (7)
3 Train made ready for a period. (9)
5 Seize on this for a period. (5)
6 The honorable sort doesn't win! (7)
7 Just an ordinary feller in the boys from Germany! (6)
8 Fish pole? (5)
9 What one might get with a couple of pints in a pub? (8,5)
10 Did it reduce income by stopping bootleg traffic? (7,6)
16 Without getting extremely angry, a sort of 2 around can find the traveler. (9)
18 Confess for the second time? (7)
19 The absence of anything spare in the drink. (7)
20 He acts about to assail with withering denunciation. (6)
21 I would have gone first, but wasted the time instead. (5)
23 Keep about fifty, and divide by two. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 799

ACROSS: 1, 18 and 14 down Oh How I Hate To Get Up in the Morning; 10 Eardrum; 11 Program; 12 Masseurs; 13 Chips; 15 Hides; 17 Astrakhan; 19 Mustering; 21 Dents; 23 Roast; 24 Catacomb; 27 Inherit; 28 Plunder; 29 Gods; 30 Grandstand. DOWN: 1 Omen; 2 Harvard; 3 Warps; 4 Hammurabi; 5 Tapis; 7 Ogreish; 8 Remissness; 9 and 6 across Coach and four; 16 Shelters; 20 Swathed; 22 Numidia; 24 Cater; 25 Clubs; 26 Bred.

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